

BIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY: Ida Milles, 66, retired Dole Company (Hawaiian Pine Company) trimming and packing forelady

Ida (Kanekoa) Milles, Hawaiian, was born in Nahiku Village, Maui on May 4, 1913. She is the fifth of six children. As a child, Ida helped her parents in the garden and gathered lau hala and bamboo with her mother. She attended school in Nahiku Village until the fifth grade. She later attended Maunaolu Seminary for one year.

In 1927, Ida worked as a maid for a haole family in Kahului. In the following year, she married John Milles and had the first of seven children. From 1932 to 1934, she and her husband worked on Nahiku Ranch. From 1934 to 1936, she did hoe-hana (off and on) at the Hana Sugar Plantation. During the next five years, she stayed at home and raised her children. She also supplemented her husband's income by catching shrimp to sell to the workers at Kaeleku and Hana Plantations.

As World War II started, Mr. Milles moved to Honolulu in search of work. Ida left her children with her mother and joined her husband in 1942. For the next two years, she worked as a matron in a home for elderly women. In 1944, the Milleses decided to purchase a home and brought their children to Honolulu. Ida subsequently found employment as a pantry woman at the USO [United Service Organizations] and as a matron at Kauluwela School.

In 1946, Ida became a trimmer at Hawaiian Pine Company. She left the cannery soon after the 1947 strike but returned the following year. She became a reliever in 1949 and was promoted to forelady in 1950.

Ida retired in 1975, joining her husband, a Tripler Hospital maintenance employee, who retired five years earlier. The Milleses are active in the Mormon Church and the Makua Alii Senior Citizen's Club. They have 27 grandchildren and 13 great grandchildren.

Tape No. 6-12-1-79 and 6-13-1-79

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

Ida Milles (IM)

March 5, 1979

Halawa Heights, Oahu

BY: Michiko Kodama (MK)

MK: Interview with Mrs. Ida Milles at her home in Halawa Heights on March 5, 1979.

Okay. Mrs. Milles, for the record, can you please tell me when and where you were born?

IM: I was born in the island of Maui in a little village called Nahiku.

MK: What year was that?

IM: May the fourth, 1913, I was born. As far as I could remember, in the age of seven, I live with my parents and we were very poor.

MK: Can you tell me about that life--what your parents did and what you did?

IM: My father was a taro farmer and my mother was a hat weaver, and a mat weaver, also. My father plants taro for our own use. Taro, watermelon, corn, sweet potato, cabbage, cucumber, all those things that the family need. My mother sells hats to buy the things that we need. In those days, salt, sugar, flour and shoyu, that would be enough. And my father traveled to a little town--called Hana--to buy our groceries. He didn't return in the evening because he travels on a donkey. We don't have a car. We couldn't afford a car because we were poor. My mother sells her hats; we get to buy our food. My father works for the County of Maui three days a week. In those days, the wages were very little.

MK: Can you tell me what kind of work he did?

IM: Cutting grass by the side of the road, cutting guavas, (cutting trees).

MK: And you were saying the wages were very little. Can you sort of estimate what the wages were?

IM: The wages were about \$5 a week--the County was paying in that time. The food was cheap, too. It wasn't too bad to have that kind of wages. My father plants our own food and we usually go fishing to get what we wanted to eat. The ranches kills the cow. Then we get meat from the ranch.

MK: How about housing?

IM: Housing? While I was attending school in the age of seven and eight years old, I remember my father, my mother and I and my little brother, we travel 15 miles to this little village. There's nobody around. That's where my father plants (wetland) taro. That's where the taro patches were. We travel by foot to go there and live. My father builds a grass shack. I lived in that kind of house. Nothing on the floor, just a dirt. My mother used to weave about three or four mats to lay on the ground. That's our bed. My brother and I were the only children that lives there. I enjoy that life because fruits were plentiful. Lots of bananas and lots of sugar cane--it grows wild--and lots of passion fruit. You know those purple ones? I go to the river to catch shrimps and I enjoy it. Lots of wild goldfish. Where we live they have spring water and the water flow freely.

MK: Did you catch the goldfish for food?

IM: We don't catch (the goldfish for food). Just for the fun of it. We used to catch and put it in a bottle or in a gallon, just to admire it. My brother and I enjoy it very much. I was eight years old...

(Telephone rings. Taping stops, then resumes.)

IM: My father was a hardworking man. He tried to do what he could do to keep his family. My father and mother go to the beach and catch opihis, go fishing. They travel about five miles to the beach. I stayed home with my brother. Those days, I wasn't afraid of nothing because nothing would harm you. The place were wilderness with nobody around.

MK: You were telling me earlier that you used to help your mother. Can you explain how?

IM: I helped my mother gather lau hala, the dry lau hala. Lau halas just fall on the ground and you pick up whatever you want. (Lau hala is one of the most important items for the Hawaiians.) And I helped my mother up in the mountain to get bamboo. My mother makes bamboo hats. She weaves them. My mother and I bring the bamboo home. [IM indicates the length of the bamboo.]

MK: About a foot long.

IM: About a foot long. My mother and I sit down and cut the bamboo into three layers. And until you get to the soft tissue of the bamboo. That's the thing that she makes hat with. We boil the water, roll the bamboo into a ball, and then put it in the boiling water for about 15 minutes. We take it out and bleach it out in the sun. It's a beautiful white hat. (I helped my mother to do all this things; it wasn't easy.)

MK: Did you go out and help your mother and father with the planting, too?

IM: Oh, yes. I plant potato, plant watermelon, plant cabbage.

MK: Were you receiving some sort of pay--not pay, but something in return for doing all these things?

IM: No. I don't get any pay. We have to help our parents. We help them in their things that they do; we get paid by eating it.

(Laughter)

IM: (Whatever we do, it's part of our share and our duty.)

MK: Okay. When you were small--you know, living in that area--what did you want to be when you grew up?

IM: Well, I didn't---I want to be a school teacher. But my parents couldn't afford. I attended the school in Nahiku until fifth grade. After fifth grade I couldn't afford to go to Hana School because we have no transportation. My parents were poor. I stayed home. I was helping my parents. Then the principal from Maunaolu Seminary came to that little village in Nahiku. She found some students. I was one of the students to go to Maunaolu Seminary. She talked it over with my parents but, to tell you the truth, my parents don't understand English. They understands only Hawaiian language. As she talking, I translated into the Hawaiian language. My father said, "I think I could. I'll pay." The tuition in those days was cheap. He could afford to pay for my school if I want to go. I do really wanted an education [said with emphasis]. I went to Maunaolu Seminary. Stayed for a year. I came back. My father took ill. I couldn't go back to Maunaolu Seminary.

MK: How did you feel about that?

IM: I was sad. I wish I could get a job. In that village, job was very scarce--you can't find any job unless you work in the sugar plantation. To get to the plantation, you have to have transportation. But you don't have transportation. We couldn't afford it. Because there's no way to come and get you because as you traveling to Hana, you have to leave the main highway and three miles down. That's where the Nahiku Village is.



MK: You never considered moving or relocating?

IM: No, I didn't. I didn't want to move. I don't know where to move because I didn't know any family that lives in different part of Maui. So in the later part, after I didn't go back to school, my parents decide to move to Kahului. When they move to Kahului, I got a job as a maid.

MK: That was in 1927, yeah?

IM: 1927. Then...

MK: Can you tell me about the time you spent as a maid--what kind of work you did?

IM: Well, this couple have two children. I takes care the children. Just like a governess. Wherever they go, I goes with them. The mother comes here to [Honolulu] on business; the father was a banker. The father stays home with the children. I takes care of the children. I cooked for them. Takes care of the house. (This haole people owns a chicken farm.) Every day I pick the eggs and deliver them to the store. The children used to stay with me, I take care. I have my own cottage. While I was working, I wanted to go back to school, but the maid pay was very little.

MK: How much was it?

IM: Twenty-one dollars a month. Whatever I earned, I give it to my parents.

MK: How about the cottage? Who was living in it and did you have to pay for it?

IM: No. I don't have to. The cottage was free.

MK: Who lived in it?

IM: Myself. I have a bedroom and a shower and a place to wash. I have my dinner in the main house. I eat in the kitchen.

MK: How did you first get that job?

IM: I have a friend. She told me about this job. Told me that there's a haole couple looking for a maid. So I went to apply for the job.

MK: How did you apply for it?

IM: In those days, you don't have to fill any form. You go there; you want the job; they accept you.

MK: Did you really want that job?

IM: I didn't...

MK: You didn't?

IM: ...I didn't care to work that kind of a job but I think that is the only kind of a job that I know how. Any other job I wouldn't know how. So, I take it because I needed a job. My parents were living in Kahului. My father wasn't working. My parents were living with an uncle and an aunt. They were wonderful people. My mother's first cousin, we stayed with them. My uncle works for the railroad company. They have a free house--everything was free. My uncle told my mother to come and live with them. I was happy to move in Kahului because to me, things were better. In what way you said it? Your life change in different atmosphere or something like that, yes. So, I like it because I improved a lot when I moved there. My hometown, things were the same every day. When I accepted that job as a maid, I worked there 1927 in the month of March.

MK: How long did you stay?

IM: Until November the third, I think. Then my parents wants to go back home.

MK: I was wondering, that was the first time you were a maid. How did you learn to do all the things you had to do for the family?

IM: Well, when my childhood days, I don't know, my mother didn't taught me how to take care a home. But maybe it's in me. I like to have everything neat. I usually take care my little nieces when they were baby. When I was young I took care my nieces because my sister died when she was 28 years old. She left a little girl. My brother-in-law gave this little girl to my mother to take care. My mother leave this baby home with me. I took care of her.

MK: Oh, so you had experience...

IM: I have experience of my own so when I accepted this job as a maid, I know more or less how to take care children.

MK: But how about the cooking? What kinds of food did you...

IM: Well, Mrs. Patterson, she plans all the meals. The meals were very simple. You cook their food very simple--a hamburger, a vegetable, mashed potato, slice of bread, milk. It was a simple thing to learn to make a hamburger. She plans the meal. Then, I watch what she does.

MK: Did she take you by the hand and teach you how to prepare the foods?

IM: No, no, no. She writes it down and then she place it on the wall in the kitchen. Then she tells me, "Ida, this is the meal I want you [to prepare]...." She stay overnight [in Honolulu].

MK: So you cooked when the wife was here in Honolulu.

IM: Yes. Then I prepared the meal. But it was a good thing that I learned how to read and how to write [said with emphasis] because I was young to accept that job--I was only 13 years old!

MK: I was wondering about how many hours per day were you working and how...

IM: Eight hours. I live there. I work continuously. You see, morning we get up at 7 o'clock. We have our breakfast, then they both goes to work. Then I send the two children to school. Then I stay home take care of the house and take care whatever I have to do.

MK: What were your feelings about that job? In the beginning you said you didn't want the job that much.

IM: At the beginning I didn't like the job. Because they were white people, I felt uncomfortable. Before, they were so rare--I mean rare, those kind of people. Where I live, in that village, when the airplane flies over, it was something unusual! You know to think now, when I thinking now, I says, "Oh, what a life," I used to think, "when I was young." I think just like we were hillbilly or something.

(Laughter)

IM: We were in the Dark Ages!

(Laughter)

IM: When the airplane flies over, we look at that and say, "What is this?" But in those days, we talk Hawaiian. Mostly our parents talks only in Hawaiian language, and we answered them back in Hawaiian. We don't dare answer them back in English because you going to get it from your parents. When we see white people, the white people they come, they cover their faces with handkerchief over here. (We wonder why.)

MK: Oh, right above their noses?

IM: Yes. Right below their eyes. I admire these white people. They're so white and good-looking. I used to ask my parents, "Why, why do they cover (Laughs) their face?" You see how ignorant we were. When I think now in those days...oh, we were in the Dark Age, eh? That's the reason why I didn't want to work, too. I didn't enjoy working there. But this couple, they were wonderful. Well, when I moved to Kahului, then I seen lot of white people. I seen Chinese, Japanese. But where we were living, we didn't have those kind of nationalities there. You see. So, I worked for a couple of months and I liked it.

MK: Why do you say you liked it? What did you like?

IM: Well, I loved to do things with the children. I love children. Especially when they comes home from school. And we get together. I class myself just like a child too because I was young. We play together in the yard, or we gather eggs together and take it to the store. This couple, they were good to me. They help me, and I learn a lot from them, also.

MK: What sorts of things did you learn?

IM: Well, they teach me how to cook. They teach me table manners--set things in the home. They teach me about some school things--arithmetic and geography, and many other things. They teach me how to speak. They teach me how to wash white items with Chlorox. They have washing machine. (I didn't know how washing machine look like. We did not have washing machine--we wash our clothes in the river.) White clothes, we have to soap it and bleach it out in the sun. Working as a maid, (I learn how to use Chlorox and many other things). Those things. I learn lot of them there.

MK: Why did you leave?

IM: I leave because my parents wants to go back. I didn't want to leave, but I still wasn't old enough to go on my own. Besides, I love my parents also. They were old. So, I went back in the later part of 1927. I think in the month of December. I think I was 12, 13 [years old]....

MK: About 14 years?

IM: Fourteen, yes. Then I married young--very young.

MK: You married in 1928...

IM: 1928. When I was 15.

MK: And you had your first child that same year...

IM: First child. In November 21, 1928.

MK: And you had your second child in 1930.

IM: 1930.

MK: And what did you do during those first two years of your marriage?

IM: First two years in my marriage. I didn't do anything. I stayed home take care my children. My first son, John, was born November 21, 1928. My second child, Ida K. Milles, January 25, 1931. In between they were two years apart. Then my third child, Margaret, she born February 10, 1932. From Margaret to Margorie, they were a year apart. Every year, one.

MK: During that time, you did work...

IM: During that time, between Margorie and George Milles, I have a little boy, Peter Paul. But he died in the age of eight. That's 1934. So, after I lost him, my fifth child, George, was born December 17, 1936. Then after that I have another child, Barbara, born January 25, 1939. I wasn't working, but I started to work when my first child was eight years old. John Milles, Jr.

MK: You were telling me though that from 1932 to 1934, you worked Nahiku Ranch.

IM: Off and on, yes.

MK: Can you tell me how you first started to work at Nahiku Ranch?

IM: I wanted to work to earn some money.

MK: Why?

IM: My husband was working for the WPA [Works Progress Administration]. He works for the ranch as part-time. The ranch pays him only \$1 a day. The ranch foreman hires lots of workers. He says, "If you really want to work, you can work for the ranch."

I says, "I'll try--my son could work, I could work too." I cook lunch for my husband and my son, then take to the pastures where they work. My son was only eight years old. He works in the ranch--cutting those guavas and all that. I say, "If my son could do that, I could do it, too." So I start working for the ranch.

MK: Was it very hard getting that job?

IM: No...

MK: Very easy?

IM: It wasn't hard to get a job. No forms to be filled. If the person who owns the ranch wants you to work, he tells you to go there and work. He keeps his own timekeeping record. Or you keep your own time. How many days you work and how many hours you work. Then you turn in your time, he pays you.

MK: How much were you getting?

IM: Well, they take like a contract.

MK: Can you explain?

IM: Yeah. They take you like a contract--they pay you 50 cents an hour. If you take it long for eight hours, well, you get that much pay. But if you work as a---you want to finish it, well, maybe the

ranch boss will tell you, "I want you to contract here. I give you \$3 to finish it up, no matter what time you finish." So, we do that. Sometime he tells you take that section, and he pays you only \$1.

MK: What kind of work did you do?

IM: Cutting the guava trees. You use a cane knife to cut the trees down. Lantana--you cut it all to clear the pastures.

MK: How did you learn how to do that?

IM: It's easy. (Laughs)

MK: Easy?

IM: Easy. You get the cane knife and cut what's in front of you. You don't have to be instructed to do it.

MK: Who were you working with?

IM: I was working with my son, my husband, and other workers of the ranch.

MK: How were your relations--what did you do when you folks were working besides doing the work?

IM: Oh! We talked, we laughed, yeah. We talk and maybe there's certain trees I cannot cut, I call my husband to do it for me.

(Laughter)

MK: If your husband was not working there?

IM: Well, if my husband not working there, I see the nearest man that works there--I call him to do it. (Laughs)

Sometimes the root of the guava is hard to cut with the cane knife. Some guava trees are huge--you have to get the manpower to do it.

MK: Were there other women working too?

IM: Uh uh [no].

MK: You were the only one?

IM: Only me.

MK: Were you limited to only certain kinds of work? They said, "This is woman work--this is for Ida?"

IM: No, no. It doesn't matter if it's a man job or woman job. It's all up to you how you accepted it.

MK: How about the pay? Same pay for men and women?

IM: No. The men have different. The woman has the cheaper pay.

MK: How did you feel about your pay?

IM: Well, I didn't feel nothing. I didn't feel that I was cheated. In fact, working on the ranch, I didn't work hard. To me, just like how I clean my yard. That's the way I was doing.

MK: How were the working conditions? You said the hours were flexible, yes? You do the work when you can and you finish it when you can.

IM: Yes.

MK: How about lunch breaks...

IM: Oh, lunch break you take as much hour you want to take. There's no limit to it. But you want to be honest, you do an honest job. If the lunch hour is one hour, you take one hour and that's it.

MK: How about supervision? How about the boss of the ranch?

IM: No. He doesn't bother. (He gives the order, where he wants you to do.) He say, "You clean this section up." If you finish, he comes and look and that's it. He don't bother you.

MK: That's all.

IM: That's all.

MK: How about---did you find anything really difficult for you to do? Was the work difficult in any way?

IM: No, it wasn't difficult for me because I told you when it's the hard part of the work I was doing I couldn't handle it, the man has to do it. I take only the easiest part that I can do---maybe the weeds are not too wild. I mean, if it's not too hard for me to cut it, I'll do that. But if it's too hard for me, I leave it for the man to do.

MK: So, the only difficulty that you had was when the work was too much for you, a strain...

IM: Yes. Right, right.

MK: Then you stopped this ranch work in 1934.

IM: 1934.

MK: Why? Why did you stop?



IM: Well, I just get tired of---(Laughs). My husband tells me, "Enough working for you. You stay home." I stayed home.

MK: You didn't need the money?

IM: No, I didn't. I say, "What am I working for?" I says, "Everything is cheap and my husband have enough to support us." So, I quit. I stayed home.

MK: Then in 1934, 1935, and 1936, you worked Hana Sugar Company.

IM: Sugar Company.

MK: Why did you decide to go work that time?

IM: Well, just curiosity. How the cane field. Because there's lots of women work in the plantation. They have Japanese, they have Filipinos, working in the plantation. I'm the only Hawaiian woman that work in the plantation.

MK: How many women were actually working? You said lots.

IM: Ten, 12 women. I worked there because my niece used to work in the plantation. My oldest brother's daughter. She and I go work together in the plantation field. We have transportation. I live the upper road where you go to Hana. The trucks comes and pick you up to take you to work. Then brings you back. When I was living in Lower Nahiku Village--no transportation. When we moved to the ranch, it was easy to get transportation. Just like the cannery. During the summer, they have students go work, so that's the same way. During the summer, they have students go to work in the plantation field.

MK: So this 1934, 1935, 1936 sugar-working experience was only summer-time?

IM: Yes. Summertime.

MK: Was your niece the one who first gave you the idea to work at sugar?

IM: No, no, no. I just feel like going to work at the sugar plantation. My husband never did work sugar plantation.

MK: But how did you know that the work was available at that time? Did someone tell you, "They're hiring now?"

IM: I just went to the office and tell that I want to work. And they said I'm hired.

MK: Oh, and what did you have to do to apply?

IM: I asked them if they are hiring plantation workers. They say they do. I said, "Only men?"

He said, "No, women." They just tell me go and work. You don't fill any form.

MK: No physical exam?

IM: No, no.

MK: Was it that easy getting the job? No problem?

IM: No problem.

MK: You said that your niece was---was she working there already?

IM: She was working there.

MK: Did she sort of help you get the job?

IM: No. She didn't. I got it myself. Hoe-hana. You know. Cleaning the weeds between the cane. (Between the ditches.)

MK: The irrigation ditches?

IM: Irrigation. Right, the irrigation ditch. That's where we hoe-hana. Goes by contract too.

MK: What do you mean by "contract?"

IM: Contract, they give you so much rows of irrigation ditches. If you finish your row before eight hours, your pay will be \$5 for six or seven rows. You see? Just like a contract. Oh, I couldn't take the heat of the sun. My niece was really young working at the plantation, but I really kept up with her. She and I. It was enjoyable working. No matter where you work, you make friends. I made friends with these ladies--Japanese ladies, Filipino ladies. We all worked together.

MK: What did you folks do together besides work?

IM: Well, each person brings their lunch and when lunch time, we all sit and eat together. The lunch hour is one hour. After lunch, we play cards. (Laugh and tell jokes.) It's very enjoyable.

MK: How were the hours? You had time to play cards?

IM: We eat really fast. We eat half-hour. We eat, half-hour we play cards.

MK: How about rest breaks? They had rest breaks?

IM: Oh, they have rest breaks--15 minutes. But, isn't that a pity that they don't have any restroom? Wherever you want to...

END OF SIDE ONE

## SIDE TWO

IM: ...restroom. We didn't have any restroom there. So, we try to make the best of it.

MK: And when you folks were working, did you kokua each other?

IM: Oh yes. When your rows are finished---about half an hour or maybe about 15 minutes more, you help the next person. Help them with their contract because then we can get through the same time. But if you finish first, help. (Everybody have a few minutes to rest.)

MK: You worked eight hours?

IM: No--it's not eight hours because it's a contract. (Contract runs like---you finish fast, you done for the day.) Then, if you get through first and if you see that person have couple more rows, you go there and give them a hand. So everybody can go home together.

MK: So about how many hours would you work, say on an average day?

IM: We work to 12 [o'clock p.m.]. Sometimes, little later than 12. We don't work exactly eight hours.

MK: And what time did you start?

IM: We start at 7 [a.m.].

MK: Did you have a luna?

IM: We do. We have a luna. He comes around and check. See the workers; see that your place is finished. Of course, you don't have to help the next person, but it's better to help each other.

MK: How did the luna treat you?

IM: Oh, treat very nice. He doesn't bother. You do your job, he won't bother you.

MK: You were saying sometimes you got paid about \$5 for the rows that you do?

IM: Uh huh [yes].

MK: How did you feel about this kind of contract work? You like contract work?

IM: I think I rather have contract because you work fast. You get it over. You don't work eight hours. You get (your job done) fast and go home early.

MK: So you like...

IM: I like that.

MK: I was wondering how were your feelings toward the job? What did you feel?

IM: Well, when I first started working in the plantation, it was really hard for me. You have to know how to hold your hoe, how to clean to get the weeds out because there's certain way (so) you won't ruin the (sugar cane). There is certain way for you to hold the hoe to clean the weeds out of the irrigation ditch.

MK: How did you learn that?

IM: Well, the luna come around and show you how. He shows you how to dig, but it doesn't take too long for you to learn. As long as you learn how to hold the hoe and get the weeds out from the irrigation ditch. But at the beginning, you holding the hoe the wrong way, and you dig the wrong way. You going to ruin the sugar cane.

MK: So, that's how you felt in the beginning?

IM: Yes, that's how I felt. It was hard for me. I says, "Well, if the children can do it, I can do it too." Well, it didn't take too long for me to learn. Of course, in the beginning, you have to learn. Then it was easy.

MK: Yeah. You worked three summers...

IM: Especially when you start working, you kind of shame to associate with each other. After you work for couple of days, "I'm not a hard person to talk to. I talk with anybody." You get acquainted with each other, and it gets the job very interesting. When you associate with each other in the field as you working.

MK: Is that what you liked about the job?

IM: That's what I want. I like to meet people, talking with them. Associating with them. I enjoy it.

MK: Why did you stop this job? You stopped in 1936.

IM: Well, I stop---my husband tells me, "Stay home. I don't want you to go work in the plantation field anymore. Enough working for you." He say, "You learn enough. I don't want you to work anymore in the plantation field."

MK: Why did he say that?

IM: Well, in the beginning, he didn't want me to go to work.

MK: Why?

IM: He say, "What I'm earning is enough." My young days, no person better than you. Everybody's the same. We don't have that kind of people [competitive people]. Whatever we have, we're satisfied with what we have.

MK: You were not competitive at that time.

IM: Yes, right. You not better than the next person. We live among Portuguese people. They own a lot of ranch property, cattle. We live on a ranch. I had a pretty good life. I mean, the house were rent free. We do what we want. Only what we have to do is to furnish. But we didn't have fabulous furnitures like these. We just have couple chairs and a couple beds. Every week we have to scrub our floor. Carry water from the river to the house, scrub the floor every Saturday with a coconut husk.

MK: That house was provided by the....

IM: Ranch. [Nahiku Ranch].

MK: The ranch didn't object to your working at the sugar company?

IM: No, no. He [ranch boss] didn't care where you work. As long as you work couple days with him. Working on the ranch. But my husband were working for WPA and he was working on the ranch the same time.

MK: Depression time, yeah?

IM: Yes. That time my mother was still living, my father passed away. We didn't plant any taro. We usually buy our taro and buy our poi. We ordered our taro. They deliver every week. We cook, we clean it, and we pound it--we make our own poi.

MK: That was when you were still at Hana Sugar [Company]?

IM: Yes, right.

MK: When did your father pass away?

IM: 1927. (My father died.)

MK: So that was Nahiku Ranch time, sugar time, yeah?

IM: Uh huh [yes].

MK: Now, after you worked Hana Sugar, you didn't work for a little while until 1941. That [1941] was the first time you worked again. But what were you doing in between 1936 and 1941?

IM: Well, in between [1936 and 1941], I stayed home to raise my children. My mother were living with me. In between [1936 and 1941], we

used to go catch shrimps--wild shrimps--in the river and sell. We sell to Kaeleku Sugar Plantation workers. Hana Plantation. The Filipino workers buy those things. My mother used to weave mat and weave hat and sell it.

MK: Who did she sell those to?

IM: To the Filipinos.

MK: How did you sell it? Okay, your mother wove, you went to get the shrimp, and then what did you do?

IM: We catch at night the shrimps. In the morning, my husband goes and sell. He walks. We don't have a car. He walks to Kaeleku--- to Hana, it's 11 miles to the sugar plantation, and sells his shrimp. Every week, on Saturday.

MK: Was it a good business?

IM: Pretty good business. Our family survived. He goes to sell that for our spending money. We have our groceries from the ranch. In those days, we order by phone. We call the stores. The sugar plantation owns the store--company store. We order whatever we want. They deliver it to us. Once a week we order--every Tuesday. The next week, we do the same.

On Saturdays, my husband catches shrimps and sell. When he sells that, with that money, he used to buy dresses for the children, clothes for myself and him, or something that we need--sheet, pillowcases. We used rice bag, flour bag sheets. We used to bleach 'em out in the sun, make it white. Sew panties for the children. Make shirts for the men.

MK: So during those years [1936 to 1941], you did that?

IM: Yes.

MK: How did that compare with the time you were working? Which one did you like better--being your own businesswoman or working for Nahiku Ranch or Hana Sugar?

IM: Well, to be my own businesswoman because in that time we were working at the ranch, doesn't make any difference. Because we were living our own---we worked just because I want to have extra money. But it didn't make any difference when I stayed home. And...

MK: What do you mean, it didn't make any difference?

IM: It didn't make any difference because while I was staying home, I still have the same amount. I still have the same things. Getting my food and my clothing. My husband tells me, "It's no use of you working." But I'm the kind of woman, I like to learn something new.

I cannot be staying home. My ambition I want to work to earn and learn. To feel that you earn your own money and know that you have worked for it. That's the feeling I have. That's the reason why I went to work.

MK: So, it didn't make that much difference in terms of money. But...

IM: No, it doesn't make any difference. But it's just that I have that kind of feeling--ambition to work. It's not because my husband couldn't support me--couldn't take care of his family. No. But it's just that I want to work. I like to know how hard the work is cutting guavas, and cleaning those things. That's the reason why I went to work.

MK: Now I understand.

IM: Like working in the plantation, the same thing too. Because I see lots of women working in the plantation, [I want to know] how do you feel working in that kind of place? That's the reason why I went to work at the plantation.

MK: Right now, you were telling me that you like being a businesswoman better? Why?

IM: As a businesswoman, I catch these shrimps and then my husband sell it. He comes home and he tells me he makes very good [money]. You see? Then I think to myself, "Shee, not a bad business. The money is good." It was hard for my husband because he didn't have any transportation. He has to walk 11 miles.

MK: Why is it that you didn't go and sell?

IM: I didn't want to. (I'm not a good saleswoman.) I like to catch [the shrimps]. But to sell, (no). I don't have the nerve to go house to house. My husband does. He's a very good businessman. He's not ashamed to do those things. I tells him, "Honey, you sell these shrimps." I say, "Who buys from you?"

He says, "It's easy. Everybody comes from the camps." From their homes. The shrimps are so cheap. A can like that, you sells only quarter. [IM indicates the size of the can through hand motions.]

MK: So like a quart can was a quarter then?

IM: Yes. Quarter. It's fresh. (The Filipinos buys it for bait.)

MK: Why did you stop doing this in 1941? What happened?

IM: Well, 1941. Here I goes again, go back to my old hometown in Nahiku Village and stay there with my mother. We left the ranch and went back there to stay.

MK: Why?



IM: Then the war break out. My youngest brother (was in Honolulu). He came here before the war and he worked. When the war started, he came back to Maui. My husband wasn't working at that time. So he [my brother] asked the brother-in-law [IM's husband] to come to Honolulu in 1941. My husband and he came to Honolulu. [IM's husband] stayed with my brother. He [IM's husband] got a job in Fort Armstrong in the Army. During the war, they wasn't paying very good. Seventy-five cents an hour. They were paying him 75 cents an hour.

MK: What kind of work was he doing?

IM: Well, he was working. Digging bunkers.

MK: You were telling me earlier that your husband couldn't find a job on Maui that time. So, that's why he came over here?

IM: Right. The job was scarce.

MK: So, your husband and brother were here and...

IM: Yes, were here. My husband were here for five months. And then, I came here to visit. I came to visit him, then this woman offer me a job as a matron. (Then I became to be friend with this woman.)

MK: How did you meet this woman?

IM: Well, this woman was the manager of this building--rooming house where my husband lives. She's married and she was working in this home. So, she offer me [a job]. She said there was an opening. She asked me if I would be interested.

MK: She was working at this other place and she told you there was an opening? Then, what did you do?

IM: (I didn't take the job right away.) I think to myself, "Shall I accept the job?" I was worried of my children back home. I have to ask my mother before I accept the job if she could take care my children. My children were all grown-up. (My mother looks after them.) So, only my youngest son, George, was the youngest there because my last daughter, Barbara, were taken care by my brother.

MK: She was hanaied, yeah?

IM: Hanai. (Adopted.) I stayed with my husband for a month. I went back [to Maui]. I asked my mother if I could accept this job. She says, "Go right ahead." She says, "I'll take care of the children." So, I left my children there. I came back to Honolulu, and I worked at that place until 1944.

MK: Why did you decide that, "Oh, I'll go to work?" Why?

IM: Well, I decided because I may be able to get somewhere. Because I'm that kind of woman, I like to improve myself. I been living there [Nahiku Village, Maui] so long, I guess I'm tired of that life. I haven't been out in the world to see the difference of how other people live. I live in that little village, getting married, and raising my children. I think maybe this is my chance to prove myself that I have something to live with. So, I accepted that job.

MK: How did you feel about leaving your children in Maui for that period?

IM: Well, I was sad. I felt so sad leaving my mother and my children back home. But, my mother encourage me and says, "I think if you go to work and help your husband, you won't come back to this life again." She say, "Maybe you will make better of life." So, I took her word for it. Every three months, my husband and I goes back home. I work. I sent money. I tell my mother, "Don't you do anything in the yard. Don't you plant anything." I say, "Just take care of yourself. Tell the children to take care the yard. You buy your poi." (My mother was old and I didn't want her to work hard.) Every week there's a poi man that comes from Keanae. [He] delivers the poi. Then my children picks it up. So, every other week, I send money home. I always tell my oldest daughter to take care of the grandma. My oldest son board at Lahainaluna School.

MK: At that time it was a private institution?

IM: Right. He was attending Lahainaluna School, so only my oldest daughter and the rest of the children were home with my mother. So, she was the oldest. I tell her, "Get your poi from the poi man." I says, "And every other week, Mother and Dad send some money. You order your food from Hana Store--the plantation store--and tell them to deliver it." So, that's what they did.

MK: So, during that time from 1941 to 1944, your kids were on Maui, and you were in Honolulu working as a maid, yeah? How was it being a maid? Describe the kind of work you did.

IM: Oh, when I was a maid (matron), I used to take care about three women. Take care their clothing, bathe them, feed them, take them to a doctor. That's the kind of work I was doing.

MK: Were they ill people, or old people?

IM: Old people. I was taking care of old people. I take them out once in a while. Every week we take them out shopping, or sight-seeing. I take care of them eight hours a day.

MK: How many days a week?

IM: We usually take care until sometimes Friday--five days a week. Sometimes Saturdays, if the family is busy. They have things to do so we take care of them Saturdays, too.

MK: How were the working conditions?

IM: Oh, the working condition is good.

MK: Can you explain...

IM: For old people, sometimes they're hard. To please them [it's hard]. But you have to have patience. Patience and love. You think if this is your mother or your grandmother. Are you going to treat them mean? You have to have love and patience to take care.

MK: So, you took care of them that way.

IM: Yes. I took care of them that way.

MK: You were saying, "We did this, we did that." How many people worked with you?

IM: Oh, well, I take care three (old ladies). Two other more ladies take care three. Three ladies takes care, each three person at a time.

MK: Did you sort of teach each other or help each other out?

IM: We teach each other.

MK: What kind of things?

IM: Because like this woman, she been working there long. She teaches me what to do. They are not wheelchair patients. They can walk. They can use their bathroom. You see, it wasn't hard for us, too. Only what we do is to take care their clothing. Take care their bedding--where they sleep. Change their sheet, wash their clothes. For bathe, they bathe their own. Cook for them. You see, the children--the people who takes care of them, their relative--they go to work. See? We go there to take care. When they come home, we go home to our home.

MK: Going back a little bit, do you think you would have been able to get that job if you didn't know that other woman?

IM: No, I wouldn't. This woman, if she didn't offer me this job, I wouldn't get that job because I wouldn't know how to go about. I were new in Honolulu.

MK: Was she high up, or about the same...

IM: No, she's higher than I am. She was a head matron.

MK: So, she had the authority [to hire you].

IM: Yes. She has the authority.

MK: Oh, and how was the pay?

IM: The pay was pretty good. We get paid by every other week. Every other week. It was \$40, I think. Forty dollars.

MK: You said it was pretty good. Why do you say that?

IM: Well, was pretty good because my other jobs, I didn't receive that much money. To me, I was happy to get that much money. I really enjoyed that job because we take care of these old ladies and we learn a lot from them, also. We usually sit down together. They talk to us about their childhood time and how they go through with their life. Sometimes, you listen to them, you feel so sad of their life. But these people are haole people.

MK: I've noticed that all along the line, you've worked quite a bit with haole people. Is that how you got to speak English so well?

IM: Yes. Yes, I do. By working with these kind of people. I speak--- I mean, my pronunciation of my words, by learning to speak with them.

MK: So, do you think it sort of helped your education?

IM: It does. It makes me learn and speak better, and pronounce your word plainly. [By] associating with people, you know how to talk.

MK: After you worked as a matron, you went back to Maui. You got your family, yeah? You also got a home. How did you manage that?

IM: Well, my husband was working and I was working. I told my husband, "Daddy, I don't want to go back to Maui." He wants to go back. He loves that life. I said, "No. I don't want to go back." To tell you the truth, I begged him. I says, "I don't want to go back to that life again."

He say, "What are you going to do?"

I said, "The savings that we have, I'm going to buy a home."

He told me, "You think Mother would like to come here and live?"

I told him, "She will." So we bought a home. We took all our savings out and bought this home on School Street. We seen in the paper. We went around to look at it. It was not a new home--it was 10 years old. Oh, and I moved there--[it was] 12 years [old], I think. But was cheap--\$6,000--they were selling. To put down [i.e., to make a down payment] was \$2,500. I says, "Well, I think

I'm going to buy this home."

He says, "You think?"

I say, "Yeah, I am." So, we went through the real estate. We bought it. Then, I furnish. I didn't furnish with the new furniture. I bought a secondhand---I read in the paper, I found this place where they were selling secondhand furnitures. So I bought it. I furnished my living room, my bedrooms, my kitchen.

MK: Then, you brought the kids.

IM: Then, I went back to Maui. Brought my mother and my children.

MK: Why were you so determined to not return to Maui?

IM: I don't want to go through again because I know to go back there, I'm going to go back again to the same way of living. Because there's no improvement there. Nobody would improve themselves there. They live day in and day out the same way.

MK: There are few job opportunities?

IM: Few job opportunity. The job there is only City and County [i.e., Maui County], and they let you work for two or three days. I don't want to go through that life again.

MK: So, you moved to Honolulu...

IM: I moved here and I bought a home. I was satisfy.

MK: After you did all that, you said you started working USO [United Service Organizations] on Bethel Street.

IM: Right. When I returned from Maui, reached here, my head matron told me the old ladies, the family are taking over.

MK: So, you were just fired or laid off?

IM: No, laid off because the work was abolished. The family took over these people. So, they don't have to pay us anymore. They don't have to hire anybody to take care of them. So, they all went back to the Mainland. I worked for the USO on Bethel Street. As a pantry [worker].

MK: Oh. How did you feel about being laid off and having to look for a new job?

IM: Well, I really felt disappointed. I felt bad. After I was laid off, I came home. The lady---the head matron told me that I---the job were not there. So, I start looking for another job.

MK: Where did you look for your jobs?

IM: Then, I met another friend. She tells me, "Ida, you want to work at the USO?"

"What doing?" I told her.

She says, "Pantry woman. You make salad and prepare other kinds of food."

I says, "Okay." So, I work as a pantry woman.

MK: What was your friend doing?

IM: She was working in the same [position].

MK: Did she hire you or did she have to take you there?

IM: Yes. She had to take me and then, the employment office hires me.

MK: Did you have to put in application or anything?

IM: Oh, yes. We have to have forms to fill it up in the USO. They ask you, "What you learn---what kind of food do you know how to handle?"

I say, "Well, macaroni salad, and Irish potato salad, and tossed salad, and all those kind of salad."

She says, "Jello and all that." And she say, "You know how to do that?"

"Yes, I do." So, I start working in there as a pantry woman. If they don't need you in the pantry, they put you up. The pantry is under---downstairs. Then, they put you upstairs to serve on the counter. Where all the service boys comes in to have lunch. That [serving the men], I don't like it. (Laughs)

MK: What did you have to do, and why didn't you like it? What did you have to do in serving?

IM: Sometimes the service boys, they get into your nerve. They gives you a wisecrack. Sometimes you serve them, they tells, "I didn't order this. We not going to eat this food." All those things. We married ladies, we shouldn't work in that kind of place. Maybe for single girls, all right. They like to give you wisecrack or do something that I don't like, eh.

(Laughter)

IM: But I didn't work long there. I worked for couple months. Then, the war ended.

MK: I was wondering when you said that sometimes the servicemen would make wisecracks or something. Could you do something about it?

IM: The wisecrack is when you serve them, they call you, "Hey, lady, how about a date. Hey, lady, what are you doing tonight?" All those things.

MK: Could you do anything about it--report to your supervisor, or nothing?

IM: Well, to these service boys, maybe they don't mean it. They away from home and they are lonesome. They try to have a date. It doesn't matter who. They trying to make a date with you, you know? They ask you for a date. You says, "I'm a married woman, I can't go out with you."

He say, "What's the difference?" You see? They tell you these things and you get angry!

MK: Besides that, how were working conditions over there?

IM: Well, that's another thing, too. You associate with lot of people. All kinds of people. Wisecracks. You associate with those rough ones. There's one thing of it--you learn of different attitudes.

MK: How about your hours? How many hours, how many days?

IM: Oh, we have to work eight hours. Eight hours a day.

MK: How many days?

IM: Well, it depends. Sometimes, you work six, seven days a week.

MK: You have lunch breaks?

IM: We have lunch breaks--half an hour. We have rest period, 15 minutes. But the food were good. They give you free lunch to eat. The job wasn't hard, was easy. The fellow workers that you worked together was very good.... I enjoy working with these people. I mean, we have shifts. You come during the day, and then you work night shift and day shift. You continuous. Because the USO runs 24 hours a day. We usually go out dancing. Yes.

MK: With the USO working people?

IM: Yes. With the working people--USO working people. The car used to come pick up the girls and take to---where the dancing place?

MK: You would go down to this club?

IM: Yeah. We go down to that club and dance until 12 o'clock [a.m.], or earlier than 12, maybe 10, we come home.

MK: You would go with your husbands?



IM: Uh huh [yes].

MK: Let's see. How were your bosses?

IM: They were nice. Nice bosses.

MK: You were never scolded?

IM: No, no. You get scolding if you do wrong. The boss tells you, "Next time, don't make the same mistake."

MK: They give you a warning.

IM: Yes. Give you a warning.

MK: In this job, it seems that you would have to stand all day, huh?

IM: Right.

MK: How did you like that?

IM: Well, the reason why I don't work much on the counter, you see. Unless they needed girls to be at the counter. Then they call me. Off and on, I do that. But most of the time, I spend in the pantry--making salad.

MK: Did you really know how to do all the things beforehand?

IM: Uh huh [yes].

MK: So, you didn't have to be trained?

IM: No.

MK: Did you have to learn a routine, or something over there?

IM: Yes. We have to because we have to make a big quantity of...

END OF SIDE TWO

TAPE NO. 6-13-1-79; SIDE ONE

MK: Continuation of interview with Mrs. Milles on March 5, 1979.

Okay.

IM: To learn how to do---making the salad, we have to use the big quantity. Either potato salad, or macaroni salad, or vegetable salad, or fruit salad, or jello, all those things. That's what we learn to do. Big quantity.

MK: Was there a training period, or a...

IM: No. There wasn't any training period. They just put you there to work and then, you go on. They tell you what they want to do. If, you know, they ask first if you know how to do this, you know how to do that. You know how to do that, you tell, "Yes."

MK: How was it for you? Was it hard or easy for you?

IM: No. It was easy. It was easy for me. But the hardest part is for me to make it a big quantity. You have to put the right season in it. The right salt or whatever--pepper or salt, whatever you put in it. That's the hardest part for me, because I didn't do those things in big quantity.

MK: And what were your feelings about this job?

IM: I like it because I learned. I learn how to make a small portion, or big portion. I learn it. I like it. I enjoy it.

MK: Did you use what you learned later on?

IM: Yes, I did. When I have a family or invite friends, I know how to do in the big portion. [If I know] how many people are coming, I know how to prepare how much I wanted. Yes.

MK: Since this is food preparation, did this help you in any way for your pineapple job later on?

IM: It does.

MK: How?

IM: It does because while you working in the food preparation, you have to know the quality of the food. Because you go by quantity and quality. I did know---by learning to do these things--preparing salad and all that. I work in the cannery---the cannery is just like a food [preparation center]. You handling the fruit. You know how to prepare these things. Like, handling the salad, you have to be well-covered. You have to have your cap on; you have to have your apron on. Before you handle the food, you have to wash your hand and see that everything is clean before you handle those things. The pineapple is the same thing. You see? When you are hired to work in the cannery, you have to have your cap, your gloves, your apron. See that you handle the pineapple. Of course, the pineapple, some of them are dirty, but to send it through the can---through the processing, that has to be clean.

MK: So, it sort of helped you, yeah? Your experience.

IM: Yes, it does.

MK: Why did you leave this for working at Kauluwela School?

IM: Well, when the USO shut down, I have to look for another job.

MK: Where did you look for jobs?

IM: I went to the school. I heard that they were hiring a matron to work in the school.

MK: How did you know they were hiring? Advertisement?

IM: Well, my children were attending that school. Then, I went there to apply. I went to the principal's office and asked if I could. I'm looking for a job. They told me because the job is open for a matron. "Do you have experience?"

I says, "No." I mean, I says "no" because, not school. I have other experience working as a matron in different kind of position.

So, she told me, "Okay, you can have. You can have the job." She say, "But when you come in, you have to fill up a form." I fill it up, I write it down--the first job I have and the time I was a matron. Then, I put it all down and then, she told me, "You come in (7 o'clock in the morning). I tell you. I show you." Then the principal told me what to do as a matron. It's not a matron like, but it's just like a janitress like. Taking care her [principal's] office. Seeing that the children are---when they use the restroom, that they keep the places clean. That's the kind of job I was working. Yes.

MK: How were working conditions?

IM: Oh, the working condition were good. I didn't have any problem working all the jobs that I worked. My attitude. I feel like making friends with anybody that I work. Even my bosses. I don't get angry or answer them back. No, I don't. So, my work condition, the principal was really nice to me.

MK: She was your boss.

IM: She was, yes. She was really nice. There is another woman that works in there, too. [She] works longer than I do. The reason why I took this job at Kauluwela School because I have to help my husband to meet the note of our home that I bought.

MK: Oh. To make the house payments.

IM: Yes, right. To make the house payment. In that time when my husband were working in the Army, wasn't paying very well. He has only 75 cents an hour.

MK: Was that already at Tripler that he was working?

IM: No, no.

MK: Still Fort Armstrong?

IM: Yes, Fort Armstrong. He was working. Then, after I get through working at Kauluwela School, then I worked at the cannery.

MK: You know, when you were still working at Kauluwela, you told me what kind of work you did. You told me the working conditions were okay, yeah? How about the hours? Six---five days a week?

IM: Five days a week. it's Monday until Friday. And work eight hours a day.

MK: And how was the pay?

IM: Oh, the pay was good. We were working. Is that for the State? The State were paying good. Every other week I used to have \$150.

MK: Oh, sounds good.

IM: Sounds good. Every two weeks, I get paid.

MK: That was enough for your home payment?

IM: Enough. [Enough] for whatever I wants to use with that money.

MK: What were your feelings towards this job? You worked there because you needed the money.

IM: Right. I didn't care...

MK: Did you like to work---you didn't like it?

IM: I didn't like it, but...

MK: Why?

IM: I don't want to do that kind of a job. Especially when you taking care the office (it okay), and then you have to take care the rest-room. Then, if you don't have enough working---taking care those things, you have to go out and work in the yard. Those things. I was a janitress anyway. I was working that kind of job. I worked there only about four months, I think because in that time, we were kind of hard to meet the payment of our home. So, when I made---I worked there to meet the payment of our home, I quit. Then, I went hunting job in the cannery.

MK: Oh. So, even if the money was kind of good...

IM: Yes. I didn't like.

MK: ...you didn't want to continue?

IM: I didn't enjoy that job. Because I don't care to work in that kind of a job.

MK: So, then you decided to go pine.

IM: Yeah. I decided to go to the cannery.

MK: Okay. I think I'll end over here today. And then, next time, we'll talk about pine.

IM: Okay.

END OF INTERVIEW

Tape No. 6-31-2-79 and 6-32-2-79

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

Ida Milles (IM)

March 26, 1979

Halawa Heights, Oahu

BY: Michiko Kodama (MK)

MK: Interview with Mrs. Ida Milles at her home at Halawa Heights on March 26, 1979.

Okay, Mrs. Milles. First of all, can you tell me when you started working at Dole Cannery?

IM: I started work 1946 in the cannery. The name was Hawaiian Pine. It wasn't Dole. I went to the employment office [at Hawaiian Pine] and one Chang was the person that hires whoever wants to work in the cannery. Well, when I went there, he hired me as a trimmer. He says, "Well, Mrs. Milles, you come in tomorrow at 7 o'clock [a.m.] at the locker room." I was there at 7 o'clock. Foreladies got us ready to go down to the glove room and get our apron and cap.

MK: Why did you decide to work at that time?

IM: Well, I decided to work because my last job was at Kauluwela School. I wasn't happy working there, so I quit. I met some friends. They said, "Because cannery had lot of women workers and you enjoy working, lots of fun." That's the reason why I went work in the cannery.

MK: How come you went to Hawaiian Pine?

IM: I went to Hawaiian Pine because it was during the summer, in the month of May and they were hiring workers.

MK: How did you know that they were hiring?

IM: One of my niece came and tell me. She was working at the cannery. She told me that they were hiring.

MK: Oh, and what kind of work was your niece doing?

IM: She was a trimmer.

MK: Why did you become a trimmer and not a packer or warehouse lady?

IM: My niece was a trimmer. She told me, "Auntie, I think it's better for you to be a trimmer because trimming, you just pick up your pine. You don't have to know the difference between the fruit. Like packing, they have so much things to learn." So, I decide to take trimming.

MK: You didn't want to learn how to pack?

IM: No. I didn't want to learn how to pack. Well, when they hired me as a trimmer, I didn't have any idea if it's going to be hard, or you going to be wet with juice on your apron. I have no idea of the working condition. I went there and I got all the equipment to work. About 5 or 10 girls--a forelady took us to the table. Set us on the table and tells the forelady on the table, "This is the new girls. They going to work on your table. You teach them." To tell you the truth, I sat on that table and looking at the pineapple coming through the Ginaca, to me like 100 pineapples a minute. Oh, they were coming out so fast. I think to myself, "Oh, I cannot learn." I watched the trimmers picking up their pineapple. Trimming and put it down in the chain, and trimming, again. The forelady gave me the knife. I pick one pine. Before I finish one pine, there's another pine coming down. I put this pine down, I pick up another pine. I didn't finish, another pine coming down. Before I realize, there was a pile of fruit in front of me.

(Laughter)

IM: I couldn't finish trimming my pine. Forelady realize that I was in trouble. She asked, "Ida, what's the matter?"

I told her, "I don't know. I can't keep up with these pineapples."

She said, "Oh, that's okay. I help you. Don't worry. If you can't keep up with your pine, let it go. Pick up every other pine." She took hold of the pineapple; she showed me how. She said, "Put your thumb in the hole of this pineapple and hold it this way." I put my thumb in the core hole of the pineapple. Then, I lay the pineapple straight on the palm of my hand. She said, "Hold the knife this way. Don't hold it too tight. Relax. Relax. That's the very first thing you do, relax. Count your stroke."

I hold the pine. You know, it's very impossible for you to turn [the pine cylinder] because you don't know how to handle your pine and your hands so stiff! You can't move. You can't relax! I hold the pineapple, I hold my knife, and I start moving.

Forelady said, "Turn your hand."

I said, "My hand and my knife don't move."



Forelady tells me, "Keep turning. Relax, relax."

I start relaxing. Then, she said, "Count your stroke." I count one, and two, and three. Then she says, "Relax. Turn your pineapple." Oh, when the forelady told me to turn my pineapple, how am I going to turn? She says, "Here." She took the pineapple from me, and she say, "Turn it this way." Just relaxed. She say, "Relax your hand and your thumb and turn this pineapple around. Then you take your knife and keep turning." After I get through one side of the pineapple, forelady tells me, "Turn it around!"

I said, "How am I going to turn it around?"

She take the pine, saying, "Turn it this way. You count one, and two." See?

MK: Oh, so in two counts, you switch the pineapple so that your thumb is in the other end of the pineapple core?

IM: Right. You see, one, and two. Then you turn on the other side of the pineapple, and then you do the same thing. Until you see that your fruit is clean. At the bottom of the knife, there's a pincher. If you seen any eyes on the pineapple, you have to turn the knife around like this, the sharp part of the knife is up, the pincher is underneath. Then you take this pincher, you pinch in the pineapple to get the eyes out. If you see that the pineapple is all clean, then you put it in the chain and let it go down to the packing table.

MK: How many strokes of the knife do you use to trim a pine?

IM: Well, three strokes. It depends how dirty the pine is. It depends if there's skins all around, then you have to take about four strokes anyway. One, two, three. Then you turn your pineapple, and one, two, three.

MK: Okay, so you have three up-and-down motions. Then you rotate the the pineapple so that your thumb is on the other side, and three strokes again [and three strokes again].

IM: Yes. Uh huh. One, two, three. Then you turn your pine. Then, one, two, three. Then you turn your pineapple around [so that you, can work on the other end of the pine cylinder].

MK: That time back in 1946, you were only told to just turn it around twice?

IM: Yes. Right. Turn it around twice because you can't turn your pineapple [i.e., more than twice]. If you turn your pineapple more than twice, you won't have the time to pick up your fruit coming down on the belt.

MK: If you rotate it too much?

IM: Yes. If you rotate too much. The pineapple coming down through the Ginaca so fast, you have no time to finish the fruit you working on.

MK: How do you know which pineapple to pick up when it's coming out of the Ginaca?

IM: Well, it depends. If the table a regular line, have seven girls. Four girls on one side, three girls on the other side. Then three pineapple comes out for the three girls. [The girl at the top--the beginning of the table--picks up the third fruit, the second girl picks up the second fruit, and the girl at the end, the first fruit. On the other side of the table, the girl at the top picks the fourth fruit, the next girl picks the third fruit....] And when it comes out, there's many doubles. Do you know what is "double?" The broken fruits through the Ginaca. The first girl that sits up [at the beginning of the trimming line], she have to pick up all those broken pines. You have to put it all out when some of the [other] fruits are coming out all in whole. But if it comes all in double, you put two doubles together and let it go down. It counts [as] one. You let the girls have some doubles because no pineapple on the belt. But if there's pineapple coming down, a whole one, the first girl has to pick [the doubles] all up and put it all out. She has to clean that and put it in a chain to let it go down to the packing side.

MK: You were saying that regular table, you have, say, seven girls?

IM: Speed and a half, 2-tall, have 10 girls. Speed and a half, 2-1/2, have 14 girls. On the trimming side, not on the packing side. Packing side, have 10 girls. If 2-1/2, speed and a half, 14 [trimmers], 10 [packers].

MK: This was back in 1947?

IM: Yes. Right. I don't know if they are doing now.

MK: You were saying you have 1-talls, 2-talls, 2-1/2. Can you sort of tell me what kind of pines they are?

IM: Well, I can't explain the size of the fruits.

MK: Oh. How many pounds does a 2-1/2 [the largest pineapples] weigh, then?

IM: Oh, about four to five pounds.

MK: So about the weight of a sugar bag [i.e., five-pound bag of sugar]?

IM: Yes.

MK: You know, with those three different pines, you like to do the small one more than the large ones?

IM: Well, when I first worked in the cannery, 1-tall table have a big and wide table and a huge belt big as this dining room and my living room.

MK: Oh, so, let's see, about two yards wide?

IM: Yes. Bigger and wider than two yards. Huge belt. The 1-tall fruits comes all into this one table. All in one belt. The girls lines up, all around. I forgot how many girls were--12 or 24 girls.

MK: Twelve girls? On both sides of that (table with the wide belt)?

IM: Yes. On both sides. That was the beginning. When I worked in the cannery. Then, each girl takes her pineapple. No matter what fruit she picks up. The girls always likes that table because everyone work together. And it's easier, too. If you don't pick up your pineapple, you don't have to.

MK: Oh. (Laughs)

IM: Because the forelady is so busy watching the other workers. She can't keep her eyes on the next person. Regular lines, you go on, you have to pick up your own pine that comes out from the Ginaca. It is counted for each worker.

MK: But even on this big belt line, wouldn't there be a pile-up if you didn't pick up your pines?

IM: By that time, the pines reach to the girls, everyone is trying to [pick up the pines and trim]. Some of the girls pick up one, two, three. We didn't mind what the other girls were doing. If they don't pick it up, well, as long we seeing them they have one fruit in their hand, they working. Everybody work together.

MK: So you used to like that table for that reason?

IM: Yes. I like that table. That table, forelady is watching--head forelady. So head forelady tells the forelady on the table that you are good trimmer, she wants a girl to send to a regular table line. So, I was one taken to this regular table line. (IM greets someone.) If there's an opening on that table, I go to that [wide-belt] table. Most girls goes on that [wide-belt] table. They stay in the locker room almost time the whistle blow at 7 o'clock a.m. Regular line is all filled [by then]--girls rush on that wide-belt table. I goes on a regular line because you have your own fruit to pick up. Girls wants that [wide-belt] table--it's easier.

MK: When did that wide-belt table end?

IM: Let me see, when? I forgot, I think couple years after I went back 1948. About one or two years after, I think. They took that table away.

MK: So, about 1950?

IM: I think so.

MK: Okay. You were telling me that the 2-1/2s are the really big pines, yeah? How did you like trimming those big pines?

IM: At the beginning, I didn't like it because my wrists hurt, also my hands. My whole hands, it hurts. You work steady on the table with 2-1/2 fruit, sometimes you cannot lift the pineapple up. Your whole arm get numb. But I did not give up working on the 2-1/2 fruit. Your hands, your arm. The forelady that works on the table was really nice, even the girls that I worked with helps me to trim my fruit. That's the important thing. Working on the table and helping one another.

MK: How was it decided that certain people go to that table?

IM: The head forelady choose you to go on the table. You work on the 2-tall and 1-tall, it's easier--lighter on your hand. But, everybody have to rotate.

MK: Oh, so everybody has a turn on the different sizes?

IM: To work there, you have to learn all these sizes of pineapple. You can't choose to stay on certain table. Everybody have to rotate on 1-tall, 2-tall, and 2-1/2.

MK: How did you learn? How were you taught to do this? Your forelady would teach you at the table?

IM: Yes.

MK: For how long did she teach you?

IM: She teaches me two days.

MK: In two days? Could you learn everything in two days?

IM: No. I didn't. But in the beginning, I learn how to pick the fruit. In two days I learned how to pick the fruit, I learned how to trim faster. But, for those doubles that comes down, I didn't know how to. It took me one week to learn everything on the table.

MK: That was always told to you by the forelady or...

IM: By the forelady. When the forelady is not around, maybe your next neighbor will show you how to do with your fruit or whatever you need help. If she's nice, [she helps]. Every now and then, the

foreladies have to keep an eye on her workers. She cannot pay attention on you all the time. She teach you what she can. As I say in the beginning, your next neighbor will help you if you asked.

MK: Back then in 1947, they had one forelady for one [trimming] table?

IM: Uh huh [yes]. One forelady for one table.

MK: When you first got started and you learned little bit, did you develop your own techniques?

IM: Yes, I do.

MK: What did you figure out on your own?

IM: When you learn, you try and figure the easy way to do. Because not only clean pineapple coming out through the Ginaca, sometimes the fruit is so dirty. Skin, eyes, and these fruit, it cannot be thrown away. Only sour, red pine, and core [can be thrown away]. Have skin here, an eye here, you just turn, dig your eyes. Trim your skin. And that's it. Beginning--when you learn--you trim your fruit all around. But, don't have to trim all around. Where the skin is, I trim.

MK: You know, one end of the pineapple is fancy. Do you have to be more careful with the fancy side?

IM: Oh, yes. You have to be more careful on the fancy because it's important part of the fruit. The forelady going to tell you don't trim too deep, or don't slice too big,...

(Telephone rings.)

IM: ...don't trim too thick. You have to trim thin. It depends how far the skin goes. If the skin goes [covers a big section of the pine], then you cut it big. If the skin just at the edge, you just trim small.

MK: You were telling me that--especially with the large pines--your hand, your wrist would get tired, eh? What did you do if your hand got tired? What can you do? Back in 1947?

IM: Well. Yes. When your hands get tired and hurt, this is what we do. We look around, there's no head forelady, we put the pineapple down on the table and then trim it. As long you don't rest your [fancy on the table]. That's the bottom of the fruit. Most important to take care the fancy. We hold our knife and trim this way [lightly resting the pine against the table]. Then we turn it around and trim. If our wrist hands are tired, that's the way we do.

MK: Back then--1947--how much checking up was there on you folks and on how the pine was being trimmed?

IM: Sometimes, the foreladies don't watch what the girls do. But, it's all individual.

MK: It depends on the foreladies?

IM: It depends on the forelady and it depends on the girls that working on the table, too. When you learn, the forelady tells you what you have to do on the pineapple. She will explain to you, "This is the important part of the fruit. You have to take care this part of your fruit."

The head forelady walking up and down. She's alert. She watch how the girls are trimming. Once in a while, she comes and stand by the table. Look at you. They grading you--the way you work. If you are not doing the right way with the fruit, head forelady tells the table forelady, "Check that girl. She's not handling the fruit careful. She's slicing too big, or she's trimming too big."

MK: Back in 1947, did they have written evaluations of the trimmers? Did they write it down that, oh, Mrs. Milles was doing very well, or Mrs. Milles...

IM: I don't know, maybe they do.

MK: So, they would just check you that way, and then...

IM: Probably they do that, but we don't know because they never come around with pencil and paper. Maybe by looking, they grade you by your work.

MK: Yeah, this other lady told me that at Hawaiian Pine, they used to check the shavings?

IM: Yes.

MK: Then only two times a day. Then they tell the forelady? Did they do that back in 1947?

IM: No, after 1947. They do that because too many butchering.

(Laughter)

IM: (The trimmers, instead trim their fruit, they chop and shove it down into the slot where all the dirty pineapple goes. The forelady is busy, she cannot watch what the trimmers are doing. Head forelady see that every trimming table's shavings have to be checked. One boy was sent underneath the tunnel to pick the shavings up from each table. A special table were set up. Whatever the boy picks up from each table, he has to bring the shavings to this special table. Head forelady check the table's shavings. She calls the table forelady.)

MK: Oh, and why would a girl at that table butcher a pine?

IM: (Well, girls are careless. Maybe the fruit were coming out too dirty. The faster you get your pineapple clean, it's better for the workers. Maybe some of the workers do think that way. Some girls are careless. I just tell that because maybe they are lazy. I don't know.)

MK: But this, they used to---the checking up...

IM: After that [pine butchering], they start checking your shaving. Pile your shaving on table after you trim, don't shove down the slot until the forelady checks.

MK: When is that? About what year were they doing that?

IM: Nineteen sixty, I think.

MK: Nineteen sixties, they were checking the shavings right on the table?

IM: Yes, they were.... Yes, right on the table.

MK: How about the two-time collection one where the boy would go underneath the tunnel and check it?

IM: Yes. When the boy comes underneath, he doesn't bring to your table. He brings to a special table.

(Dog barking in background.)

IM: The forelady from the table goes and check what the boy pick up from the table. The forelady says, "I don't know which of these girls are butchering the pine." She watches each girl on the table.

If you have a good forelady--she come and warn you. She says, "I don't know which of you girls are butchering, but, please, don't butcher anymore." The forelady tells the girls to go and see the shavings, and see how much fruit has been chopped.

MK: That was about 1960 or so?

IM: Nineteen sixty. Yes.

MK: You know, back in 1947...

IM: Nineteen forty-eight, I went back, again. Nineteen forty-seven, I stayed home.

MK: Oh, I mean 1946. Back in 1946. How was the pine? Was it covered with a whole lot of trim material?

IM: Yes. When I first worked in the cannery, the pineapple comes down really dirt. Dirty. Lot of skin. You really worked hard to get it clean. After they improve the machinery, from the Ginaca. In



the year of nineteen sixty....in that year, things were changed. (The pineapple became better, not too many skin, and most of the eyes were taken out.) Because (many changes has been made in the cannery. Ginaca machine were improve, trimming table were fix, packing machine were changed, also).

MK: What else was hard about trimming?

IM: (The juice running down on your arm by trimming. Sometimes you go [dispensary], but it didn't happen to me. New girl that comes in, forelady send the girl to the dispensary so that she be taken care. Because this pineapple juice is really bad. It makes you itchy, and sometime, you get sick from it. Especially if this girl has a weak stomach or she's allergic. You have to go to the dispensary to be treated by the nurse.) Hold your fruit so the juice falls [away from your body to the table]. If you hold the pine close to your body, your apron and everything will get wet.

MK: What was easy about your job as a trimmer?

IM: The easier part of my job as a trimmer is sitting down and trim. When I learn how to trim. Trim your fruit, see that no eyes, no sour [i.e., overripe fruit], no red pine [i.e., pineapple that becomes red after cooking; it has a distinctive orchid-like fragrance] goes on the chain to the packing. No responsibility.

MK: You were telling me that after you knew your job, it became simple. So, when it became simple for you, what kind of things did you do at the table besides trimming?

IM: I was a trimmer for 1946, 1948, 1949...

MK: You were telling me that you used to sing at the table, or you used to talk...

IM: We sing, we talk, and we tell stories. Telling jokes. Yes, they were easy. We had lot of fun on the table.

MK: What kind of things did you talk about on the table?

IM: We talking about our life. We telling each other where we were born, and what kind of a life we had, and how many children we had, and what school did we go to. Either she tells me about her life story, and I tells her about my life story.

MK: Why did you folks talk?

IM: We talk, our hands still moving. Not to get bored, trimming only. You doing your job and you talk, the time go fast. We keep talking and sing.

Sometimes, you want to go out to the bathroom, you ask your forelady. She let you go out to use the bathroom. You must not take more



than five minutes. If she's a good superior, she don't say anything. (We should not take advantage of the forelady because others wants to use the bathroom, too. Only five minutes you allowed. Then be on the table. The forelady and the girls working hard; extra pine is coming down on the belt. The forelady is helping the girls to trim your pine. Anyway, it depend on the individual.)

MK: In the beginning, did you think that you were going to continue working in this job a long time?

IM: I became expert in trimming. I work about three years at the canery. Then I was promoted to brown cap--that's a reliever. I learn how to supervise the table. A girl goes out to the restroom, or wherever, the reliever takes over her place to trim. Take her position until she comes back. Maybe the next girl wants to go out, you take over her place. But if nobody goes out, you assist to the forelady.

MK: You were saying you became a reliever about three years after you started working? So, 1949?

IM: Nineteen forty-nine.

MK: How did you become a reliever?

IM: Head forelady calls you into the office and ask you if you want to accept that position. I say, "I want to try." So I accepted.

MK: Why did you want to try and become a reliever?

IM: Well, I want something new. I like to improve myself to see if I can learn something new, not to be a trimmer all the time.

MK: Why do you think they asked you to be a reliever?

IM: Well, in that year, during the night shift, they need promotion. They need brown-cap foreladies [relievers] for the night. Most of the relievers and foreladies wants to work day shift.

MK: How come?

IM: They cannot stand working night shift. I love night shift. I took the night shift, so they promoted me to a brown cap--about a year, one summer.

MK: Why did you take night shift?

IM: I took night shift because it's good (i.e., because cool and harmony).

MK: Why is it good?

IM: (Because working at night, your fellow workers are nice. Besides,

all school children, very easy to correct them when each of them knows how to handle the job.)

MK: You were always on night shift even when you were trimmer?

IM: Yes. Right. I was always night shift.

MK: Okay, you were a reliever. When you look back, what kind of qualifications did you have then to be a reliever? What made you a good reliever?

IM: Head forelady check the way I work or the way I managing the table.

MK: Back then when you were a reliever in 1949, besides taking over for girls who would go use the bathroom and stuff...

IM: I handle time cards--tally cards.

MK: Tally cards?

IM: The tally cards. Every hour you go around and ask the girls how many sour, how many red pine, and how many double, and how many core--core is that hard part of the pineapple. Every hour, that is the reliever's job.

MK: Oh. Besides that, what else did you have to do as a reliever?

IM: Then, goes down to the packing side. See that the trimmers don't send any dirty pine down. If they do, the packing girls will to take all those dirty fruit out. Reliever have to take all the dirty slices to throw it away. See and check. The reliever do exactly like the forelady, but it's just that you are assistant to her.

You tell the girls, "Please don't keep sending dirty pine down. Smell your pine." With new workers on the table, you'll find many of this dirty fruit. Also, they don't know the difference between regular pine and red pine. Pineapple coming out so fast. (Trimmers have new workers, packers have new workers on the table, nothing you can do but keep reminding the girls.)

MK: As a reliever, you retrieved the dirty fruit for the packing side and just threw the dirty pine away?

IM: Yes. Well, as it [pineapple cylinder] goes through the chain and through the slicing machine, it's already slice. When it reach on the packing side. Then, the packers pick up the pineapple slices, check, and if [pineapples] have eyes, they going to put it on the belt. They leave it there and let the trimming forelady or the trimming reliever to go down and get all those dirty slices. If it's a good slice, you could get it [eyes and blemishes] off, but if it's not, you throw it away.

MK: When you were a reliever and you found some pines that weren't trimmed properly, how did it affect your record? What would happen to you?

IM: No, I correct the girl. Tell them, "Don't trim this way. It depends all on the eyes. If the eyes is farther in, then you have to cut it out in big slice. Otherwise, just by the edge, please try trim as thin as you can." We have to correct them. Otherwise the girls continue doing the same mistake.

MK: At that time in 1949, did they have written evaluation for relievers?

IM: Yes, they did.

MK: They used to write it out? Who would write it out?

IM: Forelady write it out. The head forelady comes around. You don't know what she doing. She's taking your record down. See how your attendance and see how your ability working on the table.

MK: How did you learn all the things you described to me? How did you learn to be a reliever?

IM: The forelady used to take us in the office. There is a locker room where they have all these foreladies and relievers. Then they show you how to write your tally cards--your name--what you have to do on the table.

MK: So they would actually take you to a separate part of the cannery, and they would teach you for how many days, or how many hours?

IM: Oh, about an hour.

MK: An hour? One day?

IM: [An hour] one day.

MK: Then they take you back to the table?

IM: They let you handle the tally card. Old-timer forelady that you working with, you're her reliever, she'll teach you all about the tally card.

MK: How did you know which forelady you would have to work with back then?

IM: You don't know. No, they just place you with that forelady.

(Telephone rings in background.)

MK: They just assign you...

IM: Uh huh [yes]. Assign you to that forelady.

MK: When you were a regular worker, a trimmer, how were your relations with your foreladies?

IM: Oh, wonderful.

MK: Wonderful? Can you explain? You know, why was it good for you?

IM: I mean, she [the forelady] comes and teach you how. (She helps me to trim my pineapple; she help me to hold my knife; she talk with all the workers on the table. Her attitude was very nice.)

END OF SIDE ONE

SIDE TWO

MK: Okay, Mrs. Milles, you can continue. You were telling me about your relations with your foreladies.

IM: She was really nice. She helps me with my fruit if I don't know how to trim it right. She comes around and asks me, "How are you? How are you doing? Are you enjoying working on my table?" She speaks very soft, not a harsh word.

MK: Then, when you became a reliever, how were your foreladies?

IM: They were nice. We worked together. [She shows me] how to manage the girls.

MK: It seems like when you were a regular trimmer, you had a good relationship with your co-workers, yeah? You help each other...

IM: You mean, with my co-workers and with my forelady? I really had. Even on the packing side. Yes, I really had good relationship with my fellow workers and with the foreladies. I have lot of friends in the cannery because I help and do good.

MK: When you were a reliever, how were you with your ladies? The ones you had to watch?

IM: Oh, to tell you, when I become a reliever, and during the summer, they hire all new ones. During the night, when the night shift workers comes in, everyone is new. (We trained them, it takes patience.) We have to have patience to work with them. We can't go rough on them, as I told you, some of them, they quickly get emotional. They get hurt fast. You have to have patience--patience in everything that you do. Especially with these new girls that comes in.

MK: What were the things that you would have to explain to them maybe two, three times?

- IM: Forelady or the reliever on the table, that's your job--to train them. Explain them the fruit, explain about the knife. Explain about the sour pine, red pine, the core, the doubles, where the juice, where the shavings slot is, where the dirty pine you have to throw, and how to hold your pineapple. How to hold your knife. How to put your thumb in core hole of the pineapple. What part of the fruit you have to be careful. Take care of the cylinder that's the fancy.
- MK: Besides the teaching of the job itself, would you have to tell them about other things, like breaks...
- IM: Yes. We have to tell them. "Any time when you leave the table, your table have numbers one, two, three, you see that number one, it means our table on the first break--we all going out. And look at the light. You go out to the locker room, and it's green, you stay there until the light turns red, then you go down on the table. You have to remember the number of your table. You on table 23, remember that number, you won't get lost."
- You must tell them, or she be wondering what table she belong to. "Please remember the number of your table. Your table is number 3, number 4, or number 23, wherever you are. Always remember the number of your table. By looking at a forelady or a reliever, you remember. Foreladies, relievers have the same cap, you get all mix up. You don't know which one is your forelady."
- MK: You were saying that they have lights--green light, red light. You would go out on a green?
- IM: When the light turns green, you go out. When the lights turn red upstairs in the locker room, you come down to your table.
- MK: Okay. How many minutes would that be?
- IM: Twelve minutes.
- MK: Twelve minutes. So, that was back when you worked 1946, and when you worked reliever, 1949, they had that system.
- IM: Yes.
- MK: When you were a reliever, you worked with people--you have to manage them, yeah?
- IM: Manage, right.
- MK: Did you like being a reliever more than being regular trimmer?
- IM: Well, no. I don't want to be regular trimmer. I like to be reliever because that shows you improve yourself in that position.

MK: Was there anything hard or easy about being a reliever?

IM: Trimmer is easier. The reason why. Girls just trim, [they] put anything on the belt, and it [pineapple] goes down. But the reliever and the forelady have the responsibility. We have to watch that the girls are doing the proper way, handling their fruit, trimming their fruit, putting their fruit on the chain. See that their fruit are clean to be sent down to the packers. But if the girls are careless, don't care about their fruit, reliever work hard. To me, to hold these positions as trimming reliever and a forelady, it's harder than the trimming.

MK: Did you enjoy reliever more than...

IM: (Oh yes. I enjoy because changing of cap, more responsibility and more money. But in working condition, it's not easy, I rather be a trimmer.) [Packers and trimmers wear white caps, relievers wear brown caps.]

MK: Oh, so you enjoyed it more for those reasons?

IM: Yes. Right.

MK: Now, after you became reliever in 1949, you became forelady, I think, the following year?

IM: Following year [1950].

MK: How did you get to be a forelady?

IM: Well, to be a forelady, you are graded.

MK: How did they grade you and decide to ask you to be forelady?

IM: As a trimmer reliever, they grade you by that. They see how you manage your workers on the table. See that the trimmers are doing their job, regular. Another thing, if you are reliever, you can't be sitting down. You always on the go--on the move. See that things are not pile. When trimmer relievers don't pick up these dirty pineapple slices from the packing side, everything is piled. Packing forelady, some don't help you. Section head on the packing side check, see the reliever on the trimming side is keeping the packing table clean. See, all the dirty slices are taken away. When you are reliever, you have to be on the go.

MK: Trimming forelady?

IM: Trimming forelady and the trimming reliever have to be on the go to see that the packing table is clean. Because trimmers are sending all this dirty fruit slices down to the packers.

MK: How did you feel when you were asked to be forelady?

IM: Oh, I feel proud. I feel happy that the head forelady ask me to be a forelady because that shows that I'm really improving my job to have that position. When they tells me, "You be the forelady for the night shift," I accepted.

When I was a trimmer, another position was open as a labor quota. I accept to take a try to this position [before becoming a forelady]. Labor quota control the Preparation Department--packing and trimming. [For labor quota], there's a forelady and a white cap. Two white caps. One for the trimming side, and one for the packing side.

MK: You were for the trimming side?

IM: Yes. I was for the trimming side, and another girl on the packing side. When the forelady tell you, "This table is moving to different table," the labor quota girl have to take the number of girls on the table. See that the table is ready to be operate. Make sure that there's no lost minute. If this table [workers] is going to move to that table, the forelady next to that table have to set the knives. The forelady on the packing side have to see that the cans are ready for the packing side. Then, we have to get all these girls and count the right quota of girls. Girls move to different table, takes about a minute to go there. No lost time.

MK: You did that before you became a forelady?

IM: Yes.

MK: So that means that you were a trimmer; you were a reliever; you were a labor quota; and then, forelady.

IM: Labor quota. [Then] forelady.

MK: Which job did you like? Did you have a preference about which jobs you like?

IM: Head forelady put you there [i.e., labor quota] for you to learn. I learned and I like it. Yes, I really did.

When I went as a labor quota, I put the numbers on the tables--first light, second light, third light [to indicate which tables would go on break first, second, and third]. We have to rotate the tables. Everyone don't go out [for rest break] at the same time. We have to rotate and see that the quota of the girls on the table, it's all in the right amount.

In the morning when they come in, they set on the table, then, our work is to count the whole cannery. The packing side, the girl goes and count on packing. The trimming side, they count how many regular lines, and how many speed and a half, and how many 2-tall, how many 2-1/2, how many 1-tall.

[When we are short of workers], then we have to borrow. Either the



packing side borrow from our side to go and fill up their side, or the trimmers borrow from the packing side to come to the trimming side. If the [number of] girls were short, we have to drop the table--we have to cut the table off. Maybe 24 tables are running today, we have to take off one table to fill up the quota of girls who are working.

MK: This job that you're talking about now was really different from your trimming job...

IM: Yes, was different.

MK: Was different from your forelady job too, yeah?

IM: Yes, pencil work. Different from a forelady.

MK: Was pencil work? Did you like the pencil work?

IM: Yes. I really do.

MK: If you had to choose between your trimming job, your reliever or forelady job, and this [labor quota] job, which one did you like best?

IM: I want the forelady job, too.

MK: Why?

IM: But, to choose between this other jobs. Labor quota, I would rather have labor quota. No pineapple to trim, I'm clean all day. But the pay wasn't as good as forelady pay.

MK: So, you like the forelady job because the pay was better?

IM: Because the pay was better. The cap was different.

MK: How was the cap different?

IM: Blue cap.

MK: It was a blue cap?

IM: Yes. Blue cap is a forelady. Forelady, it's not easy. But to choose as a working condition, I rather have labor quota.

MK: Because you don't have to touch the fruit, you don't have to...

IM: Yes. Your brains work hard. You have to remember the quota of girls. How many are going home, and how many are working. (It has to be counted correctly, all the reports has to go in the main office.)



MK: Going back to your forelady time, what were your specific duties as forelady? You watch the girls...

IM: Yes. When I start in the morning, I set my knife on the table, see if it's speed and a half or regular line, and I count how many knives we need. I take care two tables, if I have 24 and 25 girls. Well, I'm responsible for these two tables.

MK: So, back in 1940---let's see, back in 1950, a forelady for trimming had two tables to take care of?

IM: Two tables. During the summer.

MK: Oh, just during the summer, they had two tables?

IM: No, even when the summer is over. Head forelady or the section head tells you take care two tables.

MK: So, how about when you started? They [foreladies] took care of one table or two tables?

IM: No, two tables. All the time. I responsible for two tables on the trimming side. So, if it's a regular line, lucky for you--you have only 14 girls. But if it's a speed and a half, you have 24 girls to take care. Because 12 on one table--that's 2-1/2. But if you go to 2-tall--they have speed and a half--they have 10 girls each. So you have 20 girls to take care.

MK: When you have 2-tall, do you always have speed and a half?

IM: No, they have regular, too.

MK: When would they make the machine go speed and a half?

IM: (As I said, plenty workers, the boss runs speed and a half. It depends how many workers that comes in or how much pineapple.)

MK: Do they decide by the size of the fruit, or by the order, or...

IM: No. The boss decide by the size of the fruit, too. (Too many 1-tall, 2-tall, or 2-1/2 that the regular line cannot handle, then they run speed and a half table. Less girls, plenty fruit, then the office girls have to call some girls to come in to work.)

MK: You said you watch the girls, you have to watch the fruit--make sure it's coming out with the right trim. What else does the forelady do back then?

IM: Well, see that Ginaca machine is fix. Sometimes, the double seamer girls comes around check on the pineapple. (If it's off center, or the cylinder rough, packing forelady reports to the trimming forelady. Trimming forelady reports to the Ginaca foreman to let him

know what is wrong. Either the table has to move, or the Ginaca foreman has to fix the Ginaca machine. Table repair five minutes or less. In not more than five minutes, table [girls] move to different table. [Roughness or smoothness of the] cylinder depend upon the slicer. Trimming forelady put light on for the mechanic to fix the slicer.)

MK: So you were responsible for managing the table...

IM: Uh huh [yes]. Managing the table.

MK: ...the quality of the fruit coming out...

IM: Quality of the fruit, right.

MK: ...and the mechanics.

IM: Mechanic, all that. (Responsibility for all the machinery. Trim forelady or the reliever get the mechanic. Before I became a forelady, all this things I have to know--what the mechanic responsibility were. Girls slices fruit too big. Forelady responsible for what goes underneath the tunnel or what happens on the table.)

MK: It seems like you had a lot to do.

IM: And see that the flume--where the chute comes out--the chute goes this way, see? [IM moves her open hand to the left and right.]

MK: Yeah, it goes back and forth?

IM: (Yes. Ginaca chute, that divide the pineapple to the [left and right side of the] trimming table.)

MK: Is that the thing that distributes the fruit right and left?

IM: Yes. Right.

MK: You have to do a lot of things as a forelady. I was wondering, how did you learn to be a forelady?

IM: I learned by watching the foreladies. It didn't take long for me to learn to be a forelady.

MK: It takes maybe a couple months?

IM: No, no. No.

MK: Not that long?

IM: About two days.

MK: Two days, and you knew what to do?

IM: Yes. I knew what to do.

MK: Did the other foreladies give you hints?

IM: We cooperate together. We help each other. New forelady, you do the same.

MK: When you were a forelady, were there problems that you had to deal with, with the women that worked for you?

IM: No, I didn't. Everybody cooperate.

MK: During the years that you worked trimmer, reliever, quota girl, and forelady, I was wondering, you were working night shift all the time?

IM: Yes. Night shift.

MK: What hours would you have to work if it's night shift?

IM: It depends. We start, sometimes, 2:30 in the afternoon, and we get through at 12 o'clock, 1 o'clock. Some nights, I work all night till 6 o'clock in the morning. Sometimes, I start from 6 [p.m.] to 6 [a.m.]. Those years, we worked long hours at night.

MK: Back then, you told me you had rest breaks with the lights?

IM: Yes, 15 minutes---12 minutes.

MK: Twelve minutes? And you could also go to the restroom any time you needed...

IM: Uh huh [yes]. Any time you want.

MK: How about your dinner break? When would you...

IM: Oh, half an hour. It depends. First lunch. Number one and then number two lunch. Eleven o'clock to 11:30 first lunch.

MK: When is second lunch?

IM: Second lunch, 11:30 to 12:00, and 11:00 to 11:30, first lunch.

MK: Oh, okay. Back then, did you eat in the cafeteria? Or...

IM: Oh, we do, sometimes. We get together--the ladies--we eat together.

MK: Back then, you used to buy lunch in the cafeteria?

IM: We buy lunch in the cafeteria sometime. By standing in line, get your food, go to the cashier, half of the lunch hour is gone. It's better for you to bring your own lunch. You leave your lunch in

the locker. Lunch time, get your lunch out, sit by your locker or at the table in the locker room.

MK: Who did you eat with?

IM: With my girls on the table, or with the foreladies, or with the other trimmers.

MK: You mentioned lockers, yeah? When I went up to look at the cannery one day, I noticed they had the foreladies' locker room and they had...

IM: Inside.

MK: ...the regular workers'.

IM: Yes, that's where.

MK: When you became a forelady, you went to the foreladies' locker room?

IM: Foreladies' locker room. I was white cap, my locker was outside--away from the foreladies' locker. If you in the foreladies' locker, you want to come out and eat with the white caps, you come out. Otherwise, you sit in the foreladies' locker. They have a table there, and you all sit down and eat.

MK: For general working conditions like sitting, or for the noise, how was that back in the 1940's and...

IM: It was bad--the noise--the cans were coming down from the conveyer, so much noise, but after working couple months in there, the noise doesn't matter. Doesn't bother you at all.

MK: How about the smells?

IM: Oh, the smell, at the beginning--I started--I couldn't stand for a month, but I get over with it.

MK: When you were trimming, did you sit or did you stand?

IM: At the beginning, I stand. I couldn't sit down and trim. I had to stand up. When I first start to learn more about picking up my fruit and trim, I rather stand than sitting down. I knew I couldn't manage my fruit if I sit down because I will not be able to keep the juice from my arm or from my apron. If I stand up, I have more time to protect myself from the juice because I standing and I didn't want the juice or the fruit to get closer to me. I put far away from me. That's the reason why I didn't get wet at the beginning when I work in the cannery.

MK: When you look back during the 1940's when you worked, how were the working conditions? You thought good, or...

IM: Well, at first was good and wasn't.

MK: Why do you say that?

IM: I tell you. They wasn't too strict on the girls. (Head forelady and section heads' attitude wasn't pleasant--their tone of voice.)

MK: What weren't they too strict about?

IM: They were strict on your trimming, but not when the union [International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union] came in [1946]. (The union asking for more wages, and the girls start turning the head forelady and section heads in because the head foreladies' and section heads' attitude was very bad. And everything were change. Rules were made by the company, no free lunch on Christmas time, foreladies, relievers on their toes, keep your eyes on the workers.)

MK: Can you explain what kind of rules, or how were they strict?

IM: You see, they were strict. In the tally card, no mistake. You have to know the right way of putting your numbers down. Ask the girls, "How many core you have?" Girls never tell you the right number of the core, that she throw it away, or she cut it and put it in the chain and let it go down to the packing side. She will not tell you the right amount. The company strict on the foreladies and the workers. Then, the shavings start coming out [i.e., were retrieved for inspection purposes].

You cannot sing too much on the table. You cannot talk too much. You have to be very serious on your job. You have to see that your fruit are put on the chain properly and see that the foreladies are keeping an eye on the girls. But, before that, the foreladies are really careless. They didn't mind because the head foreladies are not very strict on them. But was strict to the girls.... Head forelady attitude was unpleasant.

MK: That was when?

IM: Before the union came in. But when the union came in, anything that the foreladies do, or the head foreladies do, they [i.e., workers] turn 'em in the office. They call the union. The union come in and tell them [i.e., foreladies and head foreladies]. Then, they start to cool down. They [i.e., foreladies and head foreladies] start to treat the girls right---the [head foreladies treat] foreladies right. The girls---the reliever good, and the girls.

But, the company is thinking something else. That's when they start putting the rules in. They start coming and checking your pineapple. Checking how you trim, checking your trimmers. All those things. Taking everything from the tunnel, put it up, and let the forelady [check the shavings to see how the pines are being trimmed]. They call you go down to the---where is that? Down on the other side, where they have all the slices of pineapple out?

MK: Quality inspection?

IM: Yeah, the inspection. The inspection table. They call you to go to the inspection room. There's another head forelady there. You go over there, and you check your table. You can tell. This is so many red fruit coming down, and so many sour pine in the can, and so many eyes, and so many slices--you know, your fancy? Certain tables are cutting too thick, and all that. All those things, we have to...

MK: That didn't happen to foreladies before the union?

IM: No. They didn't have that.

MK: Since we're talking about the union a little bit right now, I want to ask you what you did during the first pineapple strike in 1947. Can you tell me what happened?

IM: Oh [said with emphasis], in 1947....I didn't know anything. We were walking to work--my daughter and I--and we met a friend of ours. She was in the union. She pass us, she didn't say anything. Reach at the crosswalk [near the cannery], my daughter and I seen this picket line. We stand and wonder, "What's going on?"

The foreman came across and call out, "Who wants to work?"

I step out and say, "I want to go work." My daughter and I follow the foreman. They took us through the line. They [pickets] didn't do anything. After that, I heard that our head forelady were threatened by one of the picket. She almost got shot. I don't know how true it is, but the picket line was on---the policemen were there. Some of the members of the union, I don't know, grabbed the pistol. You see, head forelady work for the company. They can go in any time. The union have no right to stop them. But as a white cap [IM was a trimmer in 1947], picket line could do something about it. But to stop us not to go in, they cannot. My daughter and I went through the picket line. Oh, was really a jam [said with emphasis].

MK: Why do you say it was a jam?

IM: All the members [of the union] stayed out. No members work. Only the scabs, like me, like some few other workers. When I went down to the table, there wasn't no foreladies, very few workers. The management were running here and there, were trying to get everybody in to trim the pineapple because pineapple were pile and was ready to be can. The ladies were so scared because of the picket line. They couldn't go in. After a while they came in. We did not trim or pack. We manage to crush and juice.

MK: Why did you decide to go to work despite the picketing and everything?

IM: Because I want the money. If I stay home, no income.

MK: So you went in?

IM: First day of the strike, my daughter and I. (Laughs) Second day, my daughter did not go to work with me. She was afraid. But I went in. She says, "How did Mama get the nerve to go work." But it doesn't bother me. I went to work every day.

They said they need field workers. Company brought the buses. About three loads buses--women--went out in the field to work. They throw rocks at the bus in Wahiawa. In Wahiawa I work in the field for two days. But, I guess it was fun. It wasn't bad. (Laughs)

MK: What did you think about that field experience? You know, that was something different?

IM: Well, I haven't work in the pineapple field. I like to try. It wasn't hard work. Only, the thorn, when you pick the fruit, it pricks you. Oh, no, not field [said with emphasis].

MK: You didn't like it?

IM: I like it. I didn't work hard though. I pick couple of fruit, put in the bag, and the truck comes and pick it up. They don't have [harvester machine]. You put in the bag and carry. But we don't carry, the boys carry for us out at the side of the road. I worked two days in the field. It was fun.

MK: You were telling me earlier that when you were working for the company during the strike, the company people used to come and pick you up?

IM: Yes. I came back to work in the cannery when the strike was still on. Company want all the girls to come to work. We say, "We cannot. We don't have any transportation." So the company send a car to pick us up. My daughter and I on Liliha and School Street. Company car comes and pick us up every morning at 6:30 a.m.

MK: They picked you up, and they es...

IM: Yes, picked my daughter and I. We go to work, after work, company brings us home.

MK: They escorted you?

IM: No. They don't have to. You ride on the car, you go right through the gate because the picket line is out of the gate. You go in with the car.

MK: Were you scared, or anything?



IM: Yes. I was scared. We hide in the car. (Laughs)

MK: You were hiding?

(Laughter)

IM: Yes. I was scared. (But, the company need workers, wasn't no reason for us to stay home and not working. We need the money. By staying home, no income for me.)

MK: What happened in the cannery? You were working in the cannery and...

IM: Yes, when the strike was on, old-time foreladies, some of them were officers for the union so we were short of foreladies. So I became a forelady without training. But the strike did not last very long. When the strike over--everybody return to work--I was demoted to white cap. And that was my first experience to be a forelady.

MK: Just couple days, not too long.

IM: Couple days. When the strike was over, so the regular foreladies came back, they went back on their own positions. So we went down to white cap.

MK: You were telling me about the treatment you got when the regular workers came back.

IM: Oh, yes. (Cold shoulder, whisper that I was one of the scab.) They call you as "a scab." I didn't like their attitude. So, instead of staying there and be miserable--working with them, not happy--I stayed home. I didn't go back to the cannery.

MK: You came back to the cannery in...

IM: Nineteen forty-eight.

MK: Why did you decide to come back?

IM: Well, I think, "Go back again to the cannery." I was enjoying in the beginning. I think I go back, they forget all about it. You know, about the ill feeling they have against us because we kept going to work instead of staying home. I went back, but they changed their attitude. They were good.

MK: Going back a little bit, you were telling me that you heard that your head forelady at trimming was shot at. Was that Vicky Hanaïke?

IM: Vicky Hanaïke. I don't know really if she had, but they said--- rumors tells, well.... We asked her and she just say, "I don't know. They said somebody just took the pistol from the cop." We don't know who that person was, but they want to stop her from going in.



MK: You heard that from Vicky, or you heard that from...

IM: No, no. I heard that from one of the people that were there.

MK: Did you hear that during the strike or after?

IM: After the strike, I heard about it.

MK: Still going back to the strike time, do you remember about how many women went back to work during the strike time? How many of you were working, and how many...

IM: During the strike time?

MK: Yeah.

IM: Hmm. About 200 women went back. I mean, the old-timers. The old-timers went back.

MK: Do you sort of remember what kind of reasons they had for staying on the job?

IM: Well, some of them, they depend on the cannery. They helping their husbands. Some of them don't have husbands. Some of them are single. I think that's the only job that they know is the cannery. They couldn't stay out longer. You stay out longer, don't have any compensation because the union strike, it's not company. You go back to work. That's where your bread and butter comes in.

MK: At that time, could you afford to have gone on strike?

IM: I could. I could have because my husband was working for the government. I didn't have to go back to work if I don't want to, but I enjoy working in the cannery. That's the reason more, I wanted to work because my children were all grown up.

MK: Oh, so you didn't have the financial reason, yeah?

IM: Uh huh [yes].

MK: Now we've gone through from 1946 when you first started, up to 1948. From 1948 on, you continued as forelady, yeah?

IM: Yes, forelady.

MK: From the time you worked, from 1946--the first time you worked--until about 1956, were there any changes in the cannery in terms of the work you did?

IM: They are. They are changes. Then they start to experiment on this spear line--spear pineapple--so the head forelady choose me to take that job. Take care only that spear line.

END OF SIDE TWO

TAPE NO. 6-32-2-79; SIDE ONE

(Voices in background)

MK: Tape two of interview with Ida Milles on March 26, 1979.

Mrs. Milles, we were talking about the changes that occurred from 1946 to 1956.

IM: Well, then have this spear line table. The head forelady choose me to be the forelady on this spear line. The spear line table is only for special fruits, especially on fancy. My responsibility was to see that the foreladies on every table watch what the girls are putting on that belt. See that they are putting the right kind of fruit because this fruit is a special cut. It's not cut in slices. They cut it in oblong way. This belt, from one end of the table---there's a special table there, and all these fruits goes on this table. From this table, we have a special cutter. You have to put in. There's another girls that work on that table that sends that fruit through that cutter, and the fruits cuts in oblong way, not on slice.

MK: They're cut lengthwise, yeah?

IM: Yes, lengthwise. Those things--that's what they tells us--the haole people use for cocktail. That's why they use that kind of fruit. Only during the summer, night shift, I took care that table.

MK: About how many years did you do that? Between which years did you do the spear line?

IM: Well, in the year, I think 1959, 1960. I think about six or seven years. Yeah. Only on summer that we use that spear line. After the summer is over, then we go back on our regular work as a trimmer.

MK: So you did it six or seven years up to 1960?

IM: Yes.

MK: What other changes did you notice in the cannery? Were there other machine changes, or production change?

IM: Oh, there's another thing that they changes was this....the chunks. The crush pineapple. They already have that.

Oh, the other change on the Preparation Department is this big machine---I forgot the name of that machine. The girls used to go there and cut. That's the machine that cuts all the chunks. I forgot what they call that machine.

MK: So they mechanized it instead of using more girls?

IM: Yes, right. You have less girls put on that table. It come to this machine, and it goes and cuts the chunks. The belt goes up to the top and there is a square table and a wide belt about 8 inches wide. All the pine chunks drop into this table with the wide belt. Two girls on this table check. If she find any eyes or any sour, she takes it [pineapple chunks] out. It [pineapple chunks] goes down on the belt and goes in the can down to the double seamer. I forgot the name. Maybe Julia [Souza, Dole forelady] still remember. They still have that machine there.

MK: Oh, okay. Were there changes in working conditions between 1946 and 1956?

IM: No, it wasn't. Still. Only when the time the Libby came in.

MK: You mean, the Libby women...

IM: Libby women. When Libby were closed down [1968]. They were change. They came in, that's when we trimming foreladies took the packing side. One forelady from the trimming to the packing [i.e., supervises both the trimming and the packing on a single table].

MK: That's after 1956, eh?

IM: After 1956.

MK: Oh, how about between the years 1946 and 1956?

IM: No change.

MK: Okay. Later on, I'll ask you about changes after 1956. Were there any changes in the company-sponsored activities, like the Christmas dinners and picnics?

IM: Oh, yes [said with emphasis]. Before that [1956], the years that I went in [1946], and in between that [1946-1956], yes. We have free Christmas dinner. We always have free turkey. The company used to furnish all those things. We have free lunch, and then we have Christmas parties for the children. You know where the parking lot is? There was a big park there. No parking lot. That's where we have our Christmas party. The company used to give us a truck. After the summer is over, they used to give us a truck to go out picnic. Yes, in those years.

MK: You mentioned, you used to sing for the company?

IM: We used to go, and then when Christmas carol comes, they used to take us to the office---not where the Preparation Office is, but

where a Mr. White used to be. They used to take us there, and we used to sing carol on the radio.

MK: When did these things end--the Christmas parties, the park, the picnics...

IM: After the union came in. The union start to change everything. Then, those things were....

MK: How did the union change things so that these things would end?

IM: Well, the union come in, they want wages high. I guess the more the wages they asked to be raised up, then the company start to stop giving all those free things.

MK: What did you feel about that?

IM: Oh, we feel sad about it because the company don't treat us any more free things. But what can we do? The company---they have to find something because the union is asking for more wages and more wages. Well, they have to do something; they have to give away something. So, we all went out without those things.

MK: How were your pay rates from 1946 to 1956?

IM: When I start work, pay rate, they were still paying us cash. They pay us in an envelope. A tag was issued to us. When we get paid, they give us in cash--all in silver dollars. I think in a year, 1946, 1947, 1948, 1949---still they have. I think in the 1950's, the company pay us in check.

MK: Did you think the pay was fair for the jobs that you had?

IM: Well, was fair for that time. They didn't speed the pineapple as much as now. It wasn't that fast. When the union got more strong in Dole Company, more power the union have, the company have to be more strict.

MK: Now, I'm going to leave the 1956 time and go up to 1957. That was the year when you had the Dee Dupont walkout. Do you remember that walkout well? What do you remember about it?

IM: Dupont?

MK: Yeah, Dee Dupont and the walkout in 1957?

IM: When she took over, she change all the tally cards. She start to giving out rules. Then that's when the girls start to walk out because they didn't like her rules she was giving. She worked in the main office, and she was giving orders. She tells the head forelady what to do. Then the head forelady calls all the fore-ladies in and ask them that the tally card has to be this way and

that way. Then you have to have your shavings out. You have to trim your pineapple this way and that way. You have to stand right in the back of the girls when you write your tally card. The girls didn't like that.

MK: Were those the only rules or changes that she made?

IM: No, there's more rules she gave. I forgot some of the rules that she did. As far as I know, I just remembered that.

MK: Then the women decided to walk out?

IM: The women decided to walk out because they couldn't take it. Because it was hard on the girls, and hard on the foreladies to do that. You can't be standing in the back of the girls and telling them what to do. Getting all these things to come out. Sometimes, you have to look at it. You have to give and take. You cannot be strict on the girls. It's going to be hard on you [said with emphasis]. The girls won't cooperate with the foreladies if you are hard on them.

MK: When I read the newspaper stories about the Dee Dupont walkout, they said 600 women walked out. How did 600 women walk out? How did they organize it?

(Telephone rings. Taping stops, then resumes.)

IM: Well, they walk out for one day though. Six hundred women walk out. As I know, on the one day, they walk out. They pass the word on.

MK: How did they pass the word on?

IM: They tell to the forelady. The forelady tells the girls on the table. Then the next forelady does that. Everybody get together, they all walk out.

MK: Did you walk out?

IM: No, I didn't.

MK: You stayed in? You worked? How come you stayed in?

IM: I didn't want to be involved with that. Because if that's the way the heads want to do it, you just do it--that's the job. That's not for you to walk out because they not going to be a loser, you going to be the loser. I didn't want to walk out. Of course, they're going to tell me I'm a company lady, but it's not that. I'm working there, and if they give you that rule, no matter where you work, you just follow the rule.

MK: So, since you didn't walk out, what happened when the people came back?

IM: When the people came back, they says, "Shee, it's not only me that didn't walk out." There's other more foreladies that didn't walk out. They said, "Why didn't I walk out?"

I says, "Why?" I said, "If she's the head and if she tells you that's the way to do it, you do it. It's all on you, you want to take it hard, you take it. The rules are really hard, but it's all up to you, what you have to do. You, you the forelady on the table. You know exactly what your workers are doing on the table. You don't have to stand right in the back of them and see what are they doing, and pushing them what to do. You can stand, and look at each at one, and see how they work."

MK: So, what you did was that you would sort of disobey Dee Dupont and just do it your way?

IM: No, I didn't. I just follow, I just tell them. I says, "This is what Mrs. Dupont want us to do." I say, "If the rules are coming--- we having orders from Mrs. Dupont." I said, "So, our head forelady carry on the orders. And come down to us, the forelady. Then, we carry our orders to you folks." I says, "So this is what she wants to do."

Well, of course, some of the girls are very sad---they didn't like that because we trying to get hard on them. We trying to force them to do the things that they don't want to do. I told them. I says, "No, I just telling you. This is what we have--the orders. You have to do this. You have to do this way. If you do the way how they want, we not telling you that you have to do exactly." I said, "Trim the way how you think it's right." I said, "Cut the fruit the way we taught you because we already know how to do all these things." I say, "If you do the way how Mrs. Dupont want, there's no problem." I say, "And there's no problem on me, too." I says, "I'm watching at you. You doing the right way, there's nothing we can force you folks to do this, to do that, if you folks are doing the right thing."

MK: You just sort of obeyed Mrs. Dupont's rules...

IM: Yes, obey Mrs. Dupont.

MK: ...and explained it to the girls...

IM: Explain to my girls.

MK: ...and have them do as they were instructed?

IM: Uh huh [yes].

MK: After that 1957 walkout, there was another one in 1958. It was a two-day walkout about working on Saturdays. Do you remember anything about that walkout?

IM: No, I don't remember.

MK: How about in 1965. There was a one-day strike. Do you remember anything about that one?

IM: Oh, yes. That one-day strike.

MK: What did you do in 1965 during that strike?

IM: When I heard that one-day strike, I didn't go to work. I stayed home.

MK: How come you stayed home that time?

IM: Well, I heard there was going to be a strike. So, I sent an excuse that I wasn't well. And, when is that strike they had?

MK: They had a bigger one in 1968--61-day strike.

IM: I stayed home that [1968 strike]. I didn't go to work. They called. The union called me to go--not picket--but to go with these union people to see how many people are on the gate. You see, there's a gate in the back--Iwilei--to picket, and the front gate. And the CPC [California Packing Corporation], and Libby. We have to go around, but I didn't go. I said I wasn't well.

MK: So, what did you do during the 61-day strike? During the 61-day strike, besides being asked to do that, what else were you asked to do, and what did you do?

IM: They came and get me. I went picket. (Chuckles) And they choose me as captain.

MK: You were a captain?

IM: I have to have so many girls with me. Then we picket. We picket at the front gate of Dole. I didn't have any hard time. Of course, the foremen's going in and out. We didn't see any workers go through. Everybody were home. But they were trying to hire all the ones are not in the union.

MK: What did you think about that strike? That was your first big strike that you were involved in.

IM: Oh, I didn't like it. We were all lost out because the strike. No money comes in. But since we joined the union, we have to help them picket. But it wasn't hard, it wasn't rough. We stand picket, we had a lot of fun--singing and joking with the ones who work regular. They are regular in the company. So we joke with them, especially the boys that stays in the office. We were picketing every day.



MK: You went every day?

IM: Yes, every day. But to tell you the truth, I didn't like it.

MK: How did you manage? You were saying that you folks weren't getting paid, so how did you manage financially?

IM: Oh, my husband was still working for the government.

(Vistor arrives. Taping stops, then resumes.)

MK: Mrs. Milles, if your husband was not working for the government at that time...

IM: Well, probably that nobody would support me. Then I would really care because I'm not working. But in that time, the union were taking care the people. They have a welfare like. A week, you can go to this place---have a warehouse in Libby. Right in the back of Libby cannery. You go there and get your food. They give you so much meat and so much bacon. That's what the union were giving to each member.

MK: So, women who didn't have husbands to help them could have gone on strike?

IM: They really---yes. Well, they could have gone on strike, the union were paying for their rent. Even the mortgage, the union were paying. Even their medical. Before the strike comes on, they tells you, you have to pay your medical. If you have credit union, see that you pay your money in the credit union. Like the women that don't have husbands--they depending on the cannery. The union pay for their house rent. I don't know whether they were giving them money, but I know the union were supplying them with food every week.

MK: What did you think of all that?

IM: I went there to get food once--only once. I left my share for other people who need it more than I do because I had enough from my husband. Probably if I didn't have any husband, I would have depended on that food from the union.

MK: Okay. So, for the 61-day strike, you spent your time picketing, and everything? By that time, you were a union member for 15, 20 years already, yeah?

IM: Yes. When I was working in the cannery, they choose me as a steward in the union.

MK: You were a steward? When was that?

IM: Yes, 1960.



MK: How long were you a steward?

IM: Oh, about three years. We usually go in and argue with the company. The working conditions. Especially when the girls telling you, "Oh, the pineapple is coming out so fast," and, "When we want to get the mechanic to come and fix, the mechanic not there," and, "This head forelady is so---oh, she scold me." All those things, we have to go in and face the company and tell the condition of the job. How the head forelady treat the foreladies, and all those things, we have to talk.

MK: When the women would come and complain to you and you would go talk to the company people, could you correct the situation? Would the company listen to you and make the changes, or do something?

IM: Uh uh [no]. Well, when the girls come, we watch. We look at the table first. We the foreladies. They telling, oh, maybe different forelady---different table is, the pineapple coming out too fast. Or the Ginaca is sending down too many doubles and they cannot keep it up. All those kind job on the table. They tell us. You see, we belong on different table, so they come and see us. Then I get a packing steward, and we called an appointment with the foreman or the superintendent.

(Voices in background. Taping stops, then resumes.)

IM: Yes, I been in the steward for three years, and it's a hard thing to face the company. But to solve that problem, the foreladies have to check with the Ginaca [Department]. See that they not sending too fast the fruit out. Sometimes, you have to see that the Ginaca---sometimes, the machine is broken. Maybe they couldn't control. You have to see all that before you have to face the company. Because to face the company, they have to get the superintendent of the Preparation Department to come in. Then you have to have the other foreman to come in. They come in and sit down and talk with you. Before you face them, you have to know what's wrong. Either you have check yourself with the Ginaca, or you check yourself with the packing side, or you check yourself with the mechanics if they fix it. If they didn't fix it, that means you didn't report it to them. All those things, you have to do.

The steward takes all the rap. You know, they come. Then another forelady comes to you, or the girls comes to you, "Oh, my forelady on the table don't even take care us." You see, the pineapple is coming so fast, and this forelady don't even do anything. So they come see the steward to do that.

Before we go to face the company, we have to see that everything--- that the forelady already checked. And that the Ginaca can't do anything about it, then we have to face the company.

MK: Do you think it was good that women had somebody like you--a steward-- to go to with their complaints?

IM: Oh, yes, because some problems that we take in, it's solved. Before we face the company--that's what I tell you--because we have to check first before we go in [and talk with management].

MK: That was from about 1960 to 1963 that you did that?

IM: Yes.

MK: Later on, five years later, you became--the same year as the 61-day strike--you became a forelady for packing and trimming, yeah? How did you get to become forelady of both sides?

IM: We don't think that we could do it. Before our forelady retired--our head forelady--she already warned us. She said, "You better learn how to pack." They start choosing us to go packing.

I says, "I didn't come in here to be a packer. I came in here to be a trimmer."

My head forelady used to come and tell me, says, "Ida, you better learn how to pack." She say, "You don't know what the future going to be. It's going to be a big [said with emphasis] change."

I say, "Okay. I learn packing." Packing, you learn more about the fruit than when you are trimmer. Trimmer, it was hard because you lift. Especially when you go 2-1/2. It's heavy, and it was hard. Just trimming, you don't care. Some of the workers, they don't care. They'll just put their pine that way how I told you, but you go down packing side, no. As the pineapples were coming down, you have to pick up your pineapple. Pack as fast as you can. See if there's no hole in the slices; see if there's no eyes; see if you are putting the right kind of slices in each can because there's three cans coming down--choice, fancy, and tidbits.

MK: So, you have to learn packing before you became a forelady for both sides?

IM: I was a trimming forelady, but they put me as a packing forelady, too. They didn't put me down to white cap. All the way, they told us that they were going to have one forelady from trimming to packing [i.e., a forelady who supervises packing and trimming at the same time]. So, before I went to be a packing forelady, I learned how to pack. They taught us first how to pack.

MK: Since you became a forelady for packing and trimming, you have to watch more girls, and you have to check trimming and packing of the pine?

IM: Yes, more girls. Yes. But, we take the whole table, one forelady.

MK: One table?

IM: One table. Trimming and packing. Before that, we take two tables because I had only trimming side to take care. But, trimming and packing, one forelady.

MK: Which time do you like better, when you had only trimming to watch, or when you have both sides, packing and trimming, too?

IM: Oh, I think I rather have the trimming side only because the reason why, I used to trim. When they change me to be a packer, at the beginning it was a problem. It's really confused to me because the trimming is different way of handling your fruit and the packing is different. The packing, I think you concentrate your time more on the packing. That's the way I think. Because there are so many things that you have to take care on the fruit, on your slices. Sometimes, the girls, they packing their fruit. When you put on the conveyer--the can going up through the conveyer--then the inspections come in. They [inspectors] take one can out to see if the choice and the tidbits and the slices all mix up in one can. Yet, that's the fancy can. Fancy can supposed to be only fancy fruit in it. The choice is only choice. But, you don't know what the girls put in each can. The most important thing is that they want you to take care of the fancy. You have to put the right kind slices in the fancy can.

MK: Do you know why they made that change from just trimming to packing and trimming foreladies?

IM: Well, because they heard that Libby cannery is going to shut down. So, they had to put these people to work. That's the reason why.

MK: But then if one woman is doing packing and trimming, why do you need extra workers? Does it make extra jobs by doing that?

IM: You see, when they told us that the Libby cannery were going to shut down, we thought that these people were going out of job. But, they said, no. They were coming to the Dole cannery to work. We asked, "Why is it?"

They says maybe they made an agreement with this company. If the cannery shut down, they'll bring their old-timers to the cannery to work. The Libby cannery [workers] came in--Libby cannery were operating one forelady trimming to the packing. The company choose that Libby company have a better way of having one forelady trim and pack. No brown cap [i.e., a reliever] assist the forelady. They cut the brown cap off. Then put more workers on the table. They think it would be easier.

MK: What did you think about these Libby ladies who came in?

IM: When the Libby ladies came in, they really trim the different way than we do.

MK: What was different? How did they trim?

IM: They trim like holding the fruit in the palm of their hands and trim sideways. [IM demonstrates a unidirectional shaving motion.]

MK: Oh, they just shave?

IM: Yes. Shave. They don't trim the way we trim. They shave their [fruit]....and some of them, they put on the board and trim.

MK: Oh, so that was a different way, yeah?

IM: Yes, different. The way how they pick their fruit, too. They don't do like we do. Like the way how I told you--seven girls. If four come out, if you sit on that side, you pick the last pine, and if you sit on this side, you pick the first pine. Libby's, no. They pick any fruit that comes out from the divider. We have to correct them.

MK: So the Libby ladies were retrained to do it the Dole way?

IM: Yes, retrained to do Dole way. It was a hard thing. Some of them, they are old-timers. They been trimming the way they trim years and years. It's hard to break them to do the way we want. So, we go easy on them. We says, "Cannot help. I know you people been learning the Libby trim way. Now you have to learn the Dole way. Changes the way of trimming. I know it takes time to learn the Dole way of trimming. You learn."

MK: I know that when the Libby ladies came in, they weren't allowed to move up as fast as the Dole ladies, yeah? There was a rule. By that time, like you were a more senior worker, you had worked for, oh, 21 years already, 21, 22 years. Back in 1968, as a senior lady, what kind of privileges did you have because you had worked so many years?

IM: When the Libby came in, I didn't work out [on the floor]. During the summer, night shift, I wasn't out working on the table. I was in the office. That's when I told you, I do the hiring, and the tagging, and sending home in the night shift.

MK: You were doing that?

IM: Yes, I was doing that in a office.

MK: In 1968, for seniority stuff, if you were working on the floors at that time, could you, at that time, choose which women you wanted on your table? Or did you have anything...

IM: Oh, yes. We can choose the workers that we want on the table.

MK: Because you were more senior?

IM: Right. We can, but it's not fair to do that. Because the girls

coming in and you choose the workers that you know they are good workers to come on your table, it's not fair for the next forelady.

MK: Oh, so you didn't do that?

IM: No. I choose new ones that come in, too. Maybe I have one or two old-timers on the table, and the rest is all new ones.

MK: Back in 1968, did the more senior foreladies choose workers, then it went down the line to more senior to less senior foreladies choosing workers?

IM: In that time while I was a forelady on the table, it's all up to us what kind of workers we want, but it's not only me. There's other foreladies want to do that, too. The trimmers come down. As they come down, they know if the light is on, time--7 o'clock [p.m.]. Five minutes more to 7, they be coming down on the table. So they come on the table, they know what their regular table is. They sit on the table--all your good workers--they sit on the table. Then, a section head come around, ask, "How many old workers you have on your table?"

"Oh," I says, "seven."

She asks, "I want three." You have to give the three good workers. But sometimes, it's hard to tell them to get up from your table. You have to beg them.

"Please go on the table." So, they send you three new girls on your table. Then, these three new girls come in. Now your table is all jam. The girls cannot keep up. Maybe the new girl have her hands all sore, she cannot keep up. Even 2-tall, some of them couldn't handle.

So, the section head come again to you. Tell you, "I want one more girl."

"Okay." I give that one girl, I give to her. Then, another time, she comes; she like one more. Now you have only one good worker on the table. All these girls all new ones. Well, you have to work with them.

MK: Back in 1968, was that the time when you knew that Mrs. So-and-So was the number one [senior forelady] girl, number two girl, number three girl? You knew who had worked longer than you? You all knew your numbers?

IM: Yes. I know their numbers. I know who are the intermittents. We call them intermittents. The ones that have yellow tag that comes in during the summer, that are seasonal workers. You can tell they are good workers, too, because every summer they work here. Only what you don't know is the white tag, the green tag, and the red tag.

MK: They were the new ones?

IM: They are the new ones that comes in.

MK: Moving on, in 1972, they decided that they were going to get rid of the wage difference between men workers and women workers. What did you think about that?

IM: We were glad that the women have rights. We were happy about it, but....they said if the woman can do the man's job, they have the right to have the same pay because in the cannery, they have women working the men job. Driving these Yales. Some of them go around and fix the machines. Some of them, they working man job in there. When the wages were changed, we were happy about it because if the women can handle the man job, they should have the same pay. In there, we have foremen. Before, they don't have women foremen.

END OF SIDE ONE

SIDE TWO

IM: I used to work double seamer. Checking on the cans. You know, they have a double seamer? Big table. The cans comes all in one table. Then you have to divide that table, then pick up the can wherever the slices are not filled. Then you have to get another slice to fill up this can and put it on the conveyer. There's another thing that we do is to go down underneath the tunnel to see that the girls are doing right because they have all those dirty pine coming down [to the tunnel], all the eyes, sour, and red pine. They have the crush pineapple. There's girls underneath there that taking, cleaning up, pick up all the rubbish out. We have to go underneath and check what they are doing.

MK: Did you consider that men's jobs?

IM: No. That's not man's job, but for taking care the double seamer. Like foreman, that's a man job. The foreman stays on the conveyer up there and see, because there's a conveyer going up. The cans are going up and sometimes get jam. That's a man job, and the girls have to take care that. So after that, they choose a foreman to do it, they have a lady foreman there.

MK: Did you ever want to do a man's job?

IM: No.

MK: Why not?

IM: Why? Too hard.



MK: Too hard.

IM: It's hard enough while we working on the table. Oh [said with emphasis].

MK: After that--1972--when they got rid of the difference, 1974, they had the 22-day strike. Do you remember that?

IM: Nineteen seventy-four?

MK: Yeah. It was the same time they had the sugar strike. Then, pineapple went on strike, too.

IM: Oh, yeah. I remember that. I remember that we had a strike with the pineapple. Yes.

MK: What were you doing that year?

IM: Picketing. Same as the other time.

MK: Nineteen sixty-eight?

IM: I was picketing. They choose us to be the captain to take care one group. We see that all the people that goes to get their food, their names were down to see that they really have their food. That they pick up their food every week. See that the ones who are taking care of their hospital, and of their rent of their house. That's what I was doing.

MK: What did you think of that strike?

IM: It was terrible.

MK: Why do you say that?

IM: It was terrible because the men especially, and especially with the women who doesn't have any husband, they really need financial. The men that they was out of job, they need financial. Of course, maybe the food they were keeping and they were trying to keep up with their mortgage or whatever they have, but still they have to ask [for assistance]. Like myself, I have a husband. He takes care of me. Still, they want to ask if we could help. The union people ask. But we cannot. What my husband earns is just enough for me and my family. We cannot support anybody else.

MK: So, it was a bad strike financially for the people?

IM: Yes. Was really bad strike.

MK: After that--1974--the next year, you retired, yeah?

IM: Nineteen seventy-five, yes.



MK: Nineteen seventy-five. You retired because of your age?

IM: Well, I wasn't 65 yet. I was 62.

MK: Why did you retire at 62?

IM: Well, I think, that's enough. I was tired of working. I mean, during the summer, you work during the night. But, after you back--after the summer--you get early in morning, and....anyway, I think it's time for me to retire. Since my husband retire, I want to retire, too, and we both enjoy our retiring.

MK: Between, say 1957--the Dee Dupont time--and the time you retired--1975--what kind of changes did you see besides the Libby's ladies coming in? Were there any changes in the machinery during those years, those 20 some-odd years?

IM: When the Libby came in, lot of changes. The pineapple was coming faster than when we were working--[when] the Libby's wasn't in. There were lot of changes. They have lot of machine changes, lot of speed and a half. Most of the foreladies were put on the speed and a half table. The speed and a half, we really worked hard. When the Libby's came in.

MK: What kind of machine changes did they have?

IM: The conveyers, it doesn't go a regular line. Before, they goes down and it goes up. They changed the machine by making the slices. They change the slices, they put lights at the packing side. When this pineapple goes in through the slicer and they have the light on, each girl have to catch her pine before the light comes on. Those kind of changes, they have. They have this kind of belt that comes around this way. There's a girl that stands there and when the can come down, you have to see that you have the right way to stop that machine so the cans don't jam. All those kind of things were changed. Lots of changes.

MK: How about working conditions?

IM: No, they didn't change. Not to me. It wasn't changed. But only we foreladies are transferred to different department. This week, maybe, I go to double seamer where you check all the cans. You go check all the girls. You set your girls there. Then you go there and check what they are doing.

MK: So, you switch to different departments. Were there any changes in the workers who were working there? Were they different kind of people from when you first started working? No? Different ethnic backgrounds?

IM: No. That's when the Filipinos come in. During the summer, lots of Filipinos come in, and lots of Samoans. Some of them don't understand

English. To teach them, you have to make signs. You have to show them how to hold their fruits, and how to turn their hand. You show them what kind of pineapple is this, what part is the butt end and the top of the pineapple, what is the cylinder. Everything about the fruit. Because they don't understand English, was hard to teach them.

MK: Because of the language problem?

IM: Because the language. You have to show them [the chute] where you shove your juice and your shaving down. To show them, you sit and hold the pine in their hand and trim. Then, you grab the skin, you show them this is the skin...

(Telephone rings.)

IM: ...for the [chute]---where you throw all your dirty pine. It was hard.

MK: Were there any other changes, like maybe changes between relations with the management? By this time, it was Castle and Cooke, yeah? Was there any difference from when it was only Dole and Hawaiian Pine?

IM: When was only Dole, was easier. The working condition wasn't too bad. Was really not too hard for us, but when it came to Castle and Cooke, the management was really strict. More strict.

The management used to come down on the tables, stand. He's in the office now, and we have head forelady outside. He comes in the cannery and comes down, he stands there. If he sees one girl not trimming the right way, he comes down and grab the pineapple, and show her what to do. Either he comes to you and tell you.

That's the thing that the stewards take them in. That's one thing, I give credit to the union. It humbles the management. They humble the management because otherwise, they really....used to go down on the packing side. He watches, and if he see that girl is making the mistake--she's not putting the right slices in the can--he's going to come down there, and he shows her how. He said, "This is not the way you have to do it. This is the way I want you to do it." See how strict they were?

MK: Got stricter? Were there any other changes that you can think of? Changes that were important to you?

IM: No, I don't think....

MK: How about your pay? When you first began in 1946, do you remember what you were getting?

IM: I was getting about 85 cents an hour.

MK: When you retired, how much were you getting?

IM: Oh, when I retired, I worked night shift. I think I had \$5-something an hour.

MK: What did you think about the pay changes that you saw?

IM: Oh, was really different. Was good, but in those years I was having 85 cents an hour, wages were small; things were cheap. Now \$5 an hour. I was happy to have that wages, but you work for it.

MK: Did you think they were fair for the work that you were doing?

IM: It wasn't.

MK: Not enough?

IM: Not enough. (Why 85 cents an hour, the work wasn't double. Five dollars an hour, forelady took care two tables, trimming and packing. The forelady have the responsibility to take care the trimming girls, the packing girls, see that the trimmers are sending clean fruit to the packing table; and the forelady see that the packing girls are checking the slices of the fruit, or putting the right grade of fruit in the cans--no eyes, no sour, no red pine, no core, no broken fruit.)

MK: Right now, I think I'll ask you about your home life. Let's see. You were married in 1928 and you had your first child then. Then you had a second child, third, fourth, fifth, and sixth one by 1937, yeah? Then you had your last child in 1943. So, when you started working in 1946, your first child was already 18 years old? Your last child was just about three years old?

IM: Yes. That's my adopted son.

MK: How did you manage with working and with raising a family?

IM: When I have my last child, I work in the cannery during the night, but during the summer. After the summer is over, I work---this child of mine stays home with my daughter-in-law. After the summer is over, we don't work regularly. We work maybe one day a week or two days a week. My daughter-in-law takes care of him. Then, I put him in the care center when he was old enough--about four years old.

MK: Did you like pine because you didn't have to work all year around?

IM: Right.

MK: That was the reason?

IM: Right. That was the reason. Because you work during the summer,

and after the summer is over, you don't work. January, February, March, you don't work. Then, April, you work maybe couple days, and you stay home. You collect compensation. Then, maybe May--the later part of May--then you start working as a summer until September. Maybe the first or the second week, the cannery shut down. Then you stay home.

MK: So it gave you enough time to do your household things? Did you ever work during the off-season anywhere?

IM: No, I didn't because we were collecting compensation.

MK: So, you didn't work?

IM: No, I didn't.

MK: I noticed that you work night shifts. So that means sometimes you would leave for work...

IM: Two-thirty [p.m.]. Right.

MK: Who did the dinners then? Who did the dinners for your family?

IM: Well, I used to prepare their dinner. I get up about 1 o'clock in the afternoon. I cook dinner and then leave for work. When my husband comes home, he warm it up. Most of the time, my daughter-in-law do the cooking because they were living with us.

MK: So she helps?

IM: She helps me, yes.

MK: How about the children? Because you were working, did you give them chores, or something?

IM: Yes, they do. All my children have chores to do. They go to school, come home. I don't sleep---I sleep about 6. I get through at 6 o'clock in the morning, I goes home, take a bath, and have my breakfast maybe 7. I sleeps about four or five hours. I get up, and get time to talk with my children. I have my oldest son. My oldest son was married, and my second daughter, and my third one. My fourth one was still home, but they were grown up.

MK: If you weren't working, would your children have had the same kind of chores? If you weren't working?

IM: No, they do have the same chores.

MK: Since you were working, I was wondering if when you and Mr. Milles had to make decisions about buying a house, or buying a car, or buying maybe ice boxes, or stoves, who would make the decisions?

IM: I do. Because when I was working in the cannery, we bought this home. Well, we furnish it and have my family here. For new things that we want to put in the home, my husband and I decide together. Yes.

MK: When you were working at the cannery, who handled the money? Did Mr. Milles do the handling of the money? You know, taking your check and doing everything, or did you do it?

IM: I do.

MK: You also handled Mr. Milles'?

IM: Yes. Right. I do. This is what my husband used to tells me. He says, "You work. You do what you want with your money." He says, "My money," he says, "I support the home." It's all husband and wife have to be together because we were paying the mortgage of the house. So, we have to help each other. Whatever I do with my money, we have to put it together.

MK: Without the money that you were bringing in from the cannery, could you have afforded to buy this home?

IM: Oh, yes. My husband could.

MK: So, your money was more extra?

IM: Extra. Yes.

MK: So his money went for the food, rent...

IM: For the food, for the mortgage of the house, and the rest is for what we want to own--maybe furniture, things. A little that we want in our home, I used my money. We saved.

MK: I was wondering, you've worked in the cannery long time, yeah? What do you feel about your daughter who went in and worked at the cannery?

IM: My daughter? She has....

MK: Did you approve of it? Did you encourage her?

IM: Oh, I do. I do approve it because if she go works in the cannery, she's working for her own and she knows the responsibility of working and earning your own money. I do approve because my other sons, they have been working in the cannery, too. When they were single. Three of my children been working. I have a daughter--my second daughter--she haven't been working in any job, but she's a very good housewife. She stays home and cleans the house. So my older daughter work in the cannery, my oldest son worked in the cannery, and my other son works in the cannery. I approve for my

children to work because they going to be an adult. By working and learning of their responsibility, they grow up and if they have their own family, they know how to manage.

MK: Did you like them working there for a long time?

IM: No.

MK: No? Why not?

IM: No, because the cannery have no future.

MK: Why do you say that?

IM: Because if you work as a regular, that's a different story. You work as a intermittent there, when you retired, you have no benefit. No medical and no retirement.

MK: But there was a pension, huh?

IM: There was a pension. They have insurance, little bit insurance. If you retire from the cannery, they going to give you a lump sum, your service [i.e., severance] pay, and that's all. Some of the retirees have \$5,000, \$6,000. It won't last. The only benefit you have is your Social Security that you work in the cannery. If you work other jobs, maybe you get benefit. You get good retirement. But not the cannery.

MK: That's the only reason why?

IM: Yes. That's the only reason why I don't want my children to be employed in the cannery. But when my daughter were there, she was well liked by all the section heads, the head foreladies, the workers. She was really nice and they really liked her, but she wanted to improve herself so she quit the cannery and she got this job--Japan Airlines. That's where she working.

MK: Now, when you look back at your work and your life, what do you think about having worked at Hawaiian Pine Company or Dole. What do you think about your working life?

IM: My working life, I have no complaint. I enjoy working in all the job I been doing. Especially the cannery with all the people I worked with. Especially associating with them. Making many friends. But if I should think to go back and work in the cannery to make my future, I won't. I won't work in the cannery for a lifetime as a intermittent because only the benefit you would get is your Social Security. But for your retirement, oh. Yes, you going to draw \$8,000, maybe \$9,000 they give you, but how long that money going to last? If you work outside, you have good benefit and you get good retirement, it's for your lifetime. Or probably, I'm not telling that you cannot make your life with the cannery because



there are many that are working in the cannery--depending on the cannery. Probably they could, I don't know. To me, when my children were working there, I didn't want them to work all their lifetime in the cannery.

MK: I know that you have daughters and sons, yeah? What do you think about working women--women who work?

IM: Working women? Before, I think that women belong in their home, take care their children. But as the future, women have to work to keep up. To help their husband, especially the living expenses are so high. They have to work to help their husbands. I think I agreed with that. Maybe only me, I agreed. But I know there's many--especially religious people--they think the women in their home, to take their children. But I don't because things are so expensive, especially when you want to buy a home. Young adults, they just growing up to make their life, I think woman and husband used to work together--husband and wife.

MK: If you had a choice earlier, would you have started work or would you have stayed home and take care...

IM: But in my younger time, I wanted to work. Yes, I do. I wanted to work, but like how you were telling that some wants to be school teacher, some wants to be nurse, I felt the same way. I like to have something that I can show my family, my children. What I was; how did I get to show myself in my life. But some of the women tell you because they couldn't afford it. That was the same like me. I couldn't afford it. That's why you see me, I took all kinds of job because I didn't have much education to get the job that I wanted.

But probably I might have gone through school, if I did when I was bearing my children--I was still young yet. Probably if my mind was strong at that time when I was young, maybe I would go back to school and get back the things that I want. But I didn't. I just try this job and that job, but I like the cannery.

I learn a lot in the cannery. But to make my children to work in the cannery, I don't think there's any future in the cannery.

MK: If you say that, who do you think will work in the cannery, then? Later on, as the years go by, what do you think the future of the pine companies are going to be?

IM: Probably the pineapple company---probably they might have benefit because the union is trying to get a better benefit for the pineapple. See, right now, the cannery are having good benefit, but the wages are high and their compensation. They drawing pretty good compensation when they home. As the future go on, I think the cannery is going to have.

But at the time when I was working, I wouldn't like to be working



all my life in the cannery. I mean, for me and my children.

Probably now, as the union is fighting to get better benefit for the cannery, they keep working. I think the people would get better benefit now. Because right now, the union is trying to get better for the workers. I heard they were---the wages comes up now, and then they have better benefit in compensation. They drawing pretty good. Not when I was working.

MK: I think I'll end the interview over here, yeah? Unless there's something else you want to tell me.

IM: No. I don't think so.

(Laughter)

MK: Okay. Thank you very much.

IM: You welcome.

END OF INTERVIEW

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